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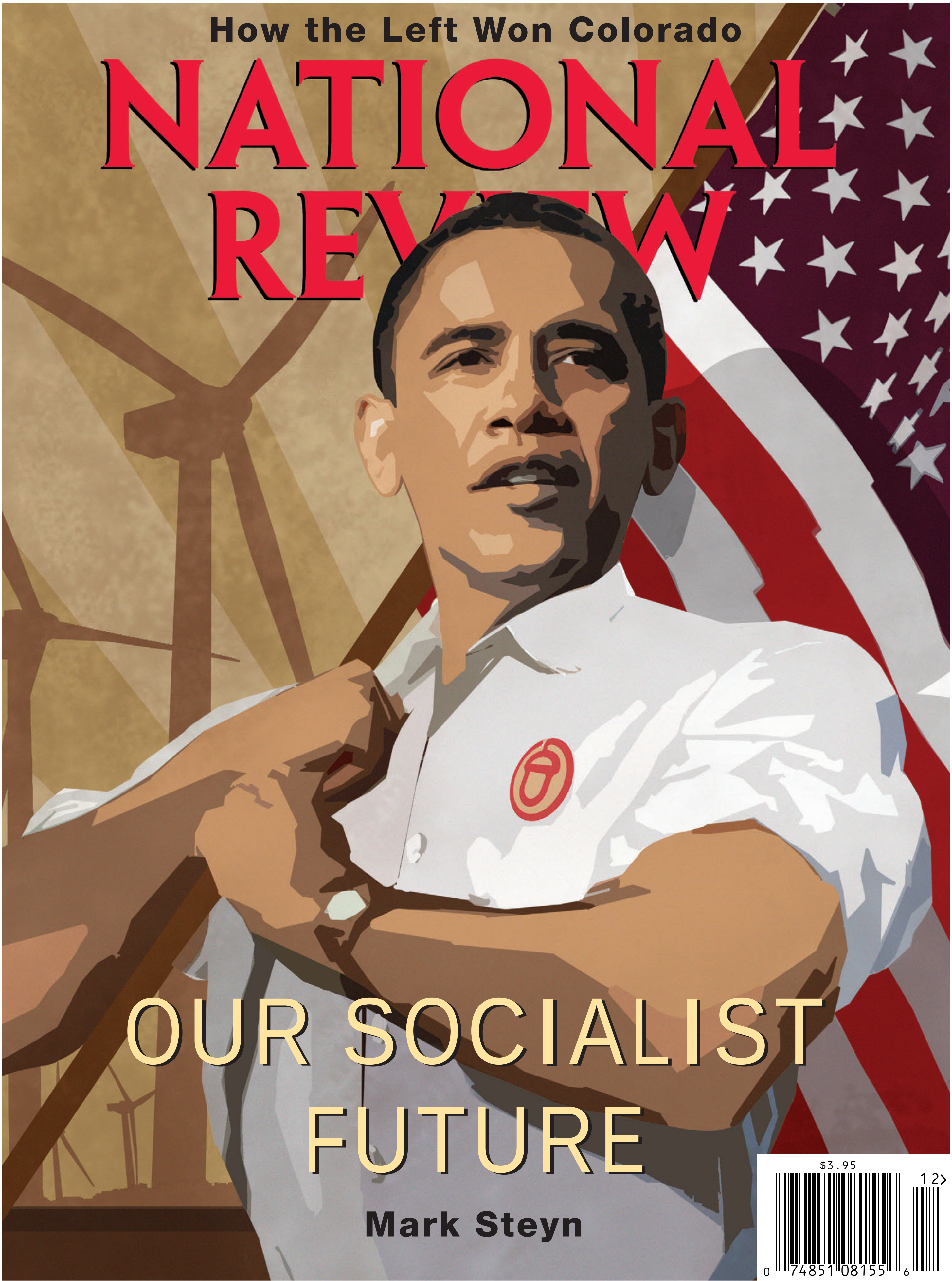

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Prime Minister Obama

Most Americans don't yet grasp the scale of the Obama project. The naysayers complain, *Oh, it's another Jimmy Carter*, or *It's the new New Deal*, or *It's LBJ's Great Society applied to health care*. You should be so lucky. It's all those multiplied a gazillionfold and nuclearized—or Europeanized, which is less dramatic but ultimately more lethal. *Mark Steyn*

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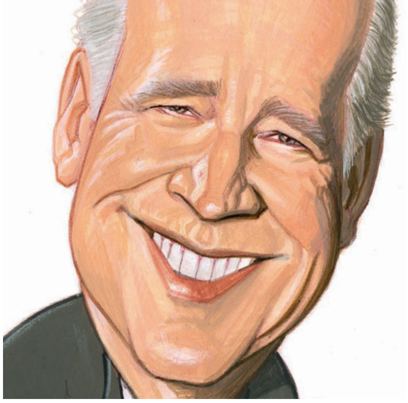

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Letters

At These Costs

Richard Nadler's piece "At What Cost?" (February 23) states that "attempts to remove illegals have diminished the conservative movement." The piece reflects the false choice often presented to Republicans: Support amnesty or offend Hispanic voters.

On National Review Online I have presented data showing that support for amnesty is not a guarantor of GOP appeal to Hispanics, and that opposition is not a deal-breaker for them. But there is something more fundamental than the data to address: the suggestion that we should sacrifice values in order to pander to a particular group of potential voters. If we approach the Hispanic vote in this manner, which values will Nadler suggest we relinquish next, and for the purpose of attracting which group?

Republicans can successfully appeal to Hispanics—both native-born and legal immigrants—by focusing on the fundamental values of patriotism, rule of law, freedom, family, support for small businesses and jobs, and education. It's what Bush did in 2004, when he received 40 percent of the Hispanic vote. His Spanish-language ads focused on values and small-business issues, not immigration. Hispanic outreach based on these and other conservative values and American ideals will bind us instead of divide us and strengthen the GOP by attracting Hispanic support.

Another premise of Nadler's piece—that Republicans advocate mass deportation—is also false. The truth is that we advocate the rule of law. And we have the credibility to do so, since the U.S. has the most generous legal-immigration policy in the world—we admit a million legal immigrants every year. We don't need to apologize for insisting that newcomers play by the rules, and surveys show that most Hispanics agree.

Rep. Lamar Smith (R., Texas)
Ranking Member, House Judiciary Committee

Richard Nadler replies: To enforce residency laws, you must remove those who reside here illegally. This remains true whether you round up border jumpers in shackles, starve them into flight, or terrorize their friends and employers into ratting them out. By whatever name you market it, Hispanics aren't buying, as I explain in my more extensive online response.

As to core beliefs: I don't know exactly when it became conservative to alienate farmers, ranchers, and chambers of commerce en masse, or when it became "law abiding" to void 7 million private labor agreements, destroying entire export industries. I don't know when it became principled to advocate home and workplace invasion on a massive scale, throwing 7 million households into crisis—households that include 5 million children and 3.5 million American citizens—over the protests of the most organized pro-life entity in American life, the Catholic Church. But I do know that this moral, economic, and political madness must stop.

Letters may be submitted by e-mail to letters@nationalreview.com.

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The Week

■ An overreaching plan for government-run health care, big ideas from Newt Gingrich, Clinton and Netanyahu preparing to face off in the Middle East, the Dow at 6,700 . . . anybody heard from Monica Lewinsky lately?

■ President Obama announced his plan to withdraw from Iraq. It's noticeably more reasonable than his rhetoric from the campaign, when he at times seemed to be saying he would pull out entirely in 16 months. He now wants to go from the current 142,000 troops to roughly 50,000 in 18 months. He would not begin the drawdown in earnest until early next year, leaving the bulk of our force in place to provide order during Iraq's national elections (scheduled for December). This plan contrasts with his campaign promise to bring a brigade or two home every month. It was nice to hear him acknowledge finally, and unmistakably, what we have accomplished in Iraq. In his telling, we have not just toppled Saddam; we have put a decent, stable Iraq, allied with us in the War on Terror, within the realm of possibility. Obama has made it clear that he will not throw out all that we have gained there, at great sacrifice, in a fit of anti-war purity. And that's a start.

■ President Obama brushed aside concerns about the stock-market crash that accompanied his first month in office, comparing its "fits and starts" to the fickle swings one sees in political tracking polls during campaigns. He missed a subtle difference: People put real money at risk in the market, and right now they are betting heavily against Obama's recovery plans. The steepest dive occurred after Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner revealed that his "plan" to stabilize the financial system was actually just a continuation of the chaotic, ad hoc approach that led us to the current juncture of uncertainty and fear. Instead of laying out clear rules for dealing with large, insolvent financial institutions, Obama laid out an agenda of big spending and tax increases, a new cap-and-trade plan, and a down payment on a national health-care system. He forges on without any realization that his promises from 2008 are irrelevant to the country's pressing problems in 2009. His instinctual comparison of the stock market to a tracking poll was revealing: He's still stuck in campaign mode.

■ In response to a housing meltdown caused in part by 1) loose lending standards, 2) shenanigans at Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and 3) perverse financial incentives, President Obama proposes to: 1) loosen lending standards, enabling homeowners to refinance mortgages that exceed the value of their homes, 2) shore up Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac with $400 billion in fresh capital, and 3) create new perverse incentives by offering lenders thousands of dollars in government handouts for each mortgage they refinance. Obama argues that this last policy will prevent foreclosures in numbers sufficient to arrest the slide in real-estate prices, but foreclosures are only one wound in that bleeding market. The other factors are arguably more meaningful and less tractable: Houses were overvalued to start with; there is a glut of supply on the market; few Americans are looking to buy a first house or to upgrade to a more expensive one; those who are shopping for houses have less access to credit than they did a year ago and must pay more for it; and the downturn has many Americans looking to pay down existing debts and hesitant to take on new ones. Obama's program has a narrow band of eligibility, and the effect of preventing a few foreclosures at the margins will be overwhelmed by deeper economic tides. Probably this will result in the government's burning through another half-trillion dollars to no benefit. The road to serfdom is paved with good intentions—and other people's money in half-trillion-dollar installments.

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ROMAN GENN

■ Several Republican governors have signaled that they will reject some stimulus money on the grounds that it would saddle them with new permanent entitlements to fund. (One Democratic governor is reportedly weighing the idea.) The stimulus bill included extensions of unemployment benefits and other programs that would have been politically impossible to discontinue after the stimulus money ran out, giving the states two options: raise taxes or ask Congress for another bailout. Louisiana's Bobby Jindal, Texas's Rick Perry, and South Carolina's Mark Sanford led a coalition of governors who objected to this "favor" from Washington. Unfortunately, they are outnumbered by governors who will take the cash now and worry about the long-term costs later. Kudos to Jindal & Co. for pointing out that with this bailout of the states, Washington is sowing the seeds for the next one.

■ Rush Limbaugh delivered a stemwinder at the Conservative Political Action Committee's annual conference. (Because Fox News broadcast it, he joked that it was his first address to the nation.) No one who listened to it can doubt his heartfelt love for America or his dedication to conservative principle. He carried on his running battle with those pundits who urge conservatives to adapt to new conditions, to adopt new policies, and to cater to subsets of the population. He was especially scornful of those who would appeal to "the Wal-Mart voter." He sees all of this advice as coded efforts to abandon the Reaganite conservatism to which he subscribes. Some of the advice is no doubt given with that intent. But surely there can be no objection to applying the insights of conservatism to the challenges of the day, or explaining how the resulting conservative policies would benefit people who are not already rich. Ronald Reagan did both things—as Limbaugh has also done. The careers of both men ought to illustrate that tradition and innovation have never been polar opposites in the conservative mind.

■ Bobby Jindal got poor reviews for his response to Obama's address to Congress. Some of the critics suggested that Jindal's national aspirations had been badly damaged. We think that Jindal was quite strong in challenging Washington's runaway spending, but did not do enough to show that conservatives have solutions to the economic problems that vex Americans. Those who wish him well, including us, should hope that both his content and his delivery improve. Those who wish him ill should remember that Bill Clinton took a worse beating for his Democratic-convention speech in 1988—he had to go on late-night television to join in the jokes about his long-windedness—and got elected president four years later.

■ Something pleasant is afoot in Connecticut—just possibly. Christopher Dodd has been senator from there for a very long time: since 1981. There is hardly a Democrat more obnoxious on all issues, foreign and domestic. He is tied only by Senators Kerry, Kennedy, and Leahy. (Remember that Biden has gone on to the vice presidency.) Larry Kudlow is one of the happiest Reaganite warriors in America. A sharp economist, an irrepressible spirit. Rumor has it that Kudlow may challenge Dodd for that Senate seat in Connecticut. And if he does, NATIONAL REVIEW, of course, will support him heartily: He is one of our own. Years ago, WFB asked his fellow Connecticut voters, "Does Lowell Weicker make you sick?" Plenty of them responded yes—and ousted that spectacularly obnoxious senator. Chris Dodd is another sick-maker. And Larry Kudlow is a wonderful cure.

■ To lead the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, a post calling for nonpartisan, academic rigor, Obama chose Dawn Johnsen, a Bush-bashing, left-wing ideologue so extreme that she has analogized abortion restrictions to state "conscription" of the woman's body and called them a form of "involuntary servitude" in violation of the Thirteenth Amendment's prohibition of slavery. When pressed about this contention at her confirmation hearing, she attacked as "false" the profile about her that Andrew McCarthy wrote for NR's March 9 edition before admitting that he had, indeed, quoted her accurately. Still, she insisted she'd "made no Thirteenth Amendment argument" when she told the Supreme Court: "Statutes that curtail [a woman's] abortion choice are disturbingly suggestive of involuntary servitude, prohibited by the Thirteenth Amendment, in that forced pregnancy requires a woman to provide continuous physical service to the fetus in order to further the state's asserted interest." Johnsen now intimates that she never thought the Thirteenth Amendment was relevant. But in 1989 she told *Glamour* magazine, "Our position is that there is no 'father' and no 'child'—just a fetus. Any move by courts to force a woman to have a child amounts to involuntary servitude." A confirmation vote has not yet been scheduled.

■ The *Rocky Mountain News*, which began publication in April 1859 on Cherry Creek (later Denver), in the Kansas Territory (later Colorado), folded, two months before its sesquicentennial. The *Rocky* was an increasingly rare thing among daily newspapers, a feisty conservative voice. Not rare is its fate as we witness a die-off of print, like the extinction of dinosaurs at the end of the Cretaceous Era. The Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, and the *Inquirer* and *Daily News* of Philadelphia, have all gone bankrupt; the *San Francisco Chronicle* looks to be next. Technology is killing them, as ads and readers go online, and papers struggle to reincarnate themselves there. In many cases, journalists speed their obsolescence by forsaking local news for liberal good works. The last battle will be between the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, struggling to be the national high-end outlet. Rupert Murdoch is the better publisher, but if Arthur Sulzberger Jr. fails, some consortium of rich liberals will step up to save his family's handiwork. Read all about it.

DENVER • FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2009 • 50 CENTS

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS.

CHERRY CREEK, K. T., SATURDAY, APRIL 23 1859. NO. 1.

VOL. 1.

1859 FINAL EDITION 2009

Goodbye, Colorado

IT IS WITH GREAT SADNESS THAT WE SAY GOODBYE TO YOU TODAY. Our time chronicling the life of Denver and Colorado, the nation and the world, is over. Thousands of men and women have worked at this newspaper since William Byers produced its first edition on the banks of Cherry Creek on April 23, 1859. We speak, we believe, for all of them, when we say that it has been an honor to serve you. To have reached this day, the final edition of the *Rocky Mountain News*, just 55 days shy of its 150th birthday, is painful. We will scatter. And all that will be left are the stories we have told, captured on microfilm or in digital archives, devices unimaginable in those first days. But what was present in the paper then and has remained to this day is a belief in this community and the people who make it what it has become and what it will be. We part in sorrow because we know so much lies ahead that will be worth telling, and we will not be there to do so. We have celebrated life in Colorado, praising its ways, but we have warned, too, against steps we thought were mistaken. We have always been a part of this special place, striving to reflect it accurately and with compassion. We hope Coloradans will remember this newspaper fondly from generation to generation, a reminder of Denver's history — the ambitions, foibles and virtues of its settlers and those who followed. We are confident that you will build on their dreams and find new ways to tell your story. Farewell — and thank you for so many memorable years together.

Rocky Mountain News

■ William Rusher was publisher of this magazine from 1957 to 1988, a key lieutenant to WFB. From 1973 to just the other day, he wrote a syndicated column. His last column was devoted to conservatism and America. He said that, beginning in the 1960s, conservatism "earned the right to call itself a 'movement.'" Conservatism earned that right because of the hard work of Rusher and his fellows—work that Rusher continued through the decades. In his final column he also noted of this country that "our actions have generally been just and courageous." Bill Rusher is just and courageous himself. And he is one of the best friends we have ever had.

■ Sen. Jim Bunning won reelection in Kentucky in 2004 by a whisker even as President Bush carried the state by 20 points. That's one reason Senate Republican leader Mitch

McConnell, also a Kentuckian, reportedly wants Bunning to drop out of the 2010 race. Bunning has responded by threatening to sue the Republican party, or resign from office and let the Democratic governor appoint his replacement, if Republicans do not back him. Bunning has also said, in public, that Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg will probably soon die from her pancreatic cancer. He has been a solid conservative vote, but he is certainly making life difficult for his dwindling band of defenders.

■ Having ripped the Bush administration's detention of enemy combatants as a top Obama campaign adviser, now–attorney general Eric Holder pronounced himself "impressed" upon finally visiting Guantanamo Bay. He gushed that the facility is very well run and that closing it (as Obama has pledged to do) will be difficult. Meanwhile, a Pentagon study ordered by Obama has confirmed that Gitmo is a model prison that meets Geneva Convention requirements for detainee treatment. Holder and the president have conceded that the nation is at war and that detaining captured enemy combatants in wartime is perfectly lawful. What's more, they acknowledge that there are some extremely dangerous terrorists who cannot be prosecuted successfully in civilian courts because of the need to protect highly classified national-defense information. Therefore, what we need is an impressive, well-run model prison that complies with the Geneva Conventions in order to hold untriable jihadists who will otherwise plot to kill Americans. Any ideas?

■ George Bush famously admonished, "Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists." Evidently the Obama doctrine is: "You're either with us or . . . we'll fund you." The new administration will provide $900 million to Hamas-dominated Gaza—part of its new tone with the Islamic world (which Bush offended in the course of freeing 50 million Muslims from tyranny). Obama spokesmen insist this largesse will not go to Hamas, formally designated a terrorist organization under U.S. law. Rather, aid will be distributed through

A World-Class Deficit

IT'S time for a pop quiz. What is bigger than the combined economies of India, Russia, Brazil, Spain, and Canada? Answer: the U.S. budget deficit over the next ten years, if the Obama budget plan becomes law.

President Obama plans to borrow about $7 trillion over the next ten years to finance all of his spending plans. That is a big number, and a tough thing to put in perspective. To present an idea of the scale of the deficits, the attached chart compares Obama's projected deficit with the 2007 GDPs of the eleven largest economies on earth other than that of the U.S.

The projected ten-year deficit is larger than the Japanese economy. It's larger than the German economy. It's larger than the bottom five economies on the list combined.

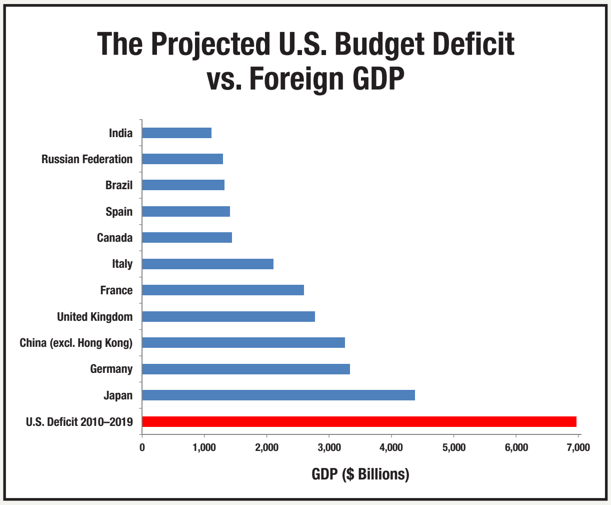
Obama accomplishes these enormous deficits by spending a lot early, and spending a lot late. The deficit this year in his budget is projected to be about $1.7 trillion, a bit larger than the entire Canadian economy and a bit smaller than the Italian one. But it's not just near-term countercyclical Keynesian foolishness fueling the outlook. The deficit in 2019, the tenth year of his projected budget, is $712 billion, about two-thirds the size of the Indian economy.

It's worth mentioning that these deficit numbers are likely much lower than what would occur if many of President Obama's policies were adopted. The Obama budget has an astonishingly rosy outlook for the economy, especially if one considers the likely impact of all of this spending.

While the president likes to blame the Bush administration for all of his troubles, the fact is that the CBO ten-year budget forecast published in January 2008 called for a ten-year *surplus* of a few hundred billion dollars. The economy has taken some of the steam out of revenues in the first few years, but the mind-numbing spending increases do the majority of the work. The long-term economic outlook has not changed much since last January. Yet the Obama budget calls for a deficit that is roughly double the size of the one forecast by the CBO just over one month ago.

There was a time when the horrible Bush deficits were the center of Democratic rhetoric. But back when the first round of Bush tax cuts were passed, the CBO estimated that their ten-year cost would be $1.35 trillion. Bush gave us Spain. Obama is shooting for the world.

—KEVIN A. HASSETT



The Projected U.S. Budget Deficit vs. Foreign GDP

SOURCES: MOODY'S ECONOMY.COM; CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE; OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
NOTES: U.S. DEFICIT MEASURED IN BILLIONS OF DOLLARS; GDP MEASURED IN 2007 U.S. DOLLARS

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non-governmental agencies like the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. But in Gaza the UNRWA is effectively an arm of Hamas: It employs Hamas members, knowingly allows funding to flow to Hamas (claiming it is too difficult to screen recipients for terror ties), teaches Hamas's virulent brand of radical Islam in its schools, and allows its vehicles to ferry Hamas operatives and their weapons for attacks against Israel. Indeed, even when it does perform social-welfare functions, UNRWA relieves Hamas of those obligations, so its resources can be diverted to savagery. Historically, aid to Palestinians has generally resulted in more terrorism—and this is a record amount of aid.

■ The Obama administration reversed an 18-year-old ban on photographing flag-draped coffins of servicemen arriving at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware. The ban was originally instituted by George H. W. Bush, in response to media exploitation: The networks had run a split-screen image of him joking with reporters as coffins returned from the American invasion of Panama. The ban was maintained by Bill Clinton, and became contentious again under George W. Bush. The press wanted images of industrialized death to blacken the Iraq War. Obama agreed, and Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who must agree with the president, has lifted the ban, saying that the decision to photograph should be left to the families of the slain. It is not clear how this will work in practice: Will one family's veto preclude a shot, or one family's request allow it? Suppose family members disagree? Look for there to be enough wiggle room so that when the Afghan war, to which President Obama says he is committed, heats up, the practice of recent presidents can be resumed.

> It's refreshing to see that even some Democratic senators understand that stifling views they disagree with is not only unfair but unwise.

■ It was a pleasant surprise when the Senate voted 87–11 to prohibit the FCC from reimposing the Fairness Doctrine on America's broadcasters. The vote is not binding without the House's consent, which does not seem forthcoming; and in any event, separate rules mandating "diversity in communication-media ownership" could achieve the same end by different means. Still, it's refreshing to see that even some Democratic senators understand that stifling views they disagree with is not only unfair but unwise.

■ Congress is on the verge of granting the District of Columbia statehood on the cheap, by awarding it a permanent seat in the House of Representatives. The current proposal would increase the size of the House from 435 to 437 members. The first seat would go to the District. The other would belong to the state that's next in line to receive one, based on existing formulas of apportionment. Right now, this happens to be Utah. Its House delegation would expand by one member—at least until 2012, when the results of the next census take effect. Some call this a praiseworthy example of bipartisan compromise. Whereas D.C. certainly would elect a Democrat, Utah presumably would elect a Republican. Such political scale-tipping should have nothing to do with it, however. The Constitution is explicit: "No Person shall be a Representative who shall not . . . be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen." As a non-state, the District is forbidden to enjoy the full benefits of congressional membership. Senators and representatives who have taken an oath to uphold the Constitution should vote down this unconstitutional ruse.

■ "We will end education programs that don't work," promised Obama in his address to Congress. Perhaps congressional Democrats misheard him, because they're working hard to kill the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, which helps nearly 2,000 low-income children attend private schools. By all accounts, parents whose kids participate in this school-choice demonstration project are strongly satisfied. Moreover, a study by the Department of Education last year found that "achievement trends are moving in the right direction." For teachers' unions, however, school choice is always a step in the wrong direction because it empowers parents rather than bureaucrats. In February, their handmaidens in the House passed a spending bill that cuts off funding for the D.C. program after the 2009–10 school year. Obama saw fit to enroll his daughters at one of the most prestigious and expensive private academies in Washington. He should at least get behind this modest plan to help poor kids escape the public schools that weren't good enough for Malia and Sasha.

■ A year ago, Candidate Obama endorsed the "concept" of medical marijuana, and promised to stop federal raids on dispensaries in states that have passed medical-marijuana laws (14 at the latest count). Two days after his inauguration, the Drug Enforcement Agency raided a dispensary in Lake Tahoe, Calif. (a medical-marijuana state). When a reporter recently asked Eric Holder if such raids would continue, the attorney general said, "No. What the president said during the campaign . . . is now American policy." A victory for common sense, if Holder and Obama mean what they say. Also, alas, the only federalism we're likely to see in this administration.

■ Washington State is about to put into effect a referendum, passed by voters in November, to allow the terminally ill to ask physicians to assist their suicides. The activists behind the initiative have already made clear that they want euthanasia to be even more widely available: They next want to legalize assisted suicide for people with incurable, but not terminal, diseases. Physicians in Washington should redouble their efforts to palliate the pain of their terminally ill patients, but resist any pressures to become killers rather than healers.

■ To shape the intelligence on which policy is made, Obama has chosen Charles W. "Chas" Freeman to run the National

Intelligence Council. A staunch critic of Israel and lackey for Saudi Arabia, Freeman argues that Americans “should examine ourselves” to understand what “caused” the 9/11 attacks. Appalling, but it pales next to Freeman’s shilling for Communist China, which he faults only for failing to move swiftly enough in 1989 to crush democratic reformers at Tiananmen Square. “The truly unforgivable mistake of the Chinese authorities,” wrote Freeman in a 2006 e-mail, “was the failure to intervene on a timely basis to nip the demonstrations in the bud, rather than—as would have been both wise and efficacious—to intervene with force when all other measures had failed to restore domestic tranquility.” Ah yes, the “domestic tranquility” of tyranny. Ferdinand Peroutka, the late Czech democrat persecuted by the Nazis and Soviets, sagely observed that tyrants always need their Freemans. Following the “rowdies who beat the nation,” they are the “rowdies who give thanks for the beating in the name of the nation. The policeman is followed—and sometimes also preceded—by the liar.”

■ A World Conference on Racism is due to be held in Geneva at the end of April, under the auspices of the United Nations Human Rights Council. There has been one of these before, in 2001 at Durban, and it was a vile public display of anti-Semitism. The United States walked out. The committee preparing for Durban II has Libya in the chair, with Iran and Cuba as deputies, and the notion that these countries might promote genuine human rights is rich, not to say comic. The State Department sent delegates to sound out the preparations under way for the agenda of Durban II. Israel, they discovered, is about to be singled out for another bashing, and under the guise of protecting religion Muslim countries may not be criticized. On one hand, the United States is therefore deciding not to participate in Durban II, and on the other it will attend as an observer and might even join in if the Libyans and others amend the agenda. So influence and moral example are both forfeit.

■ The headline read, “Jewish Leaders: She’s Not the Hillary We Knew.” Hmm. CBS reported, “In a swift about-face from her views as New York’s senator, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is now hammering Israel over its treatment of Palestinians in Gaza.” Yes, HRC is not a senator from New York anymore—and she is freer to indulge her true views on the Middle East. When she moved to New York before the 2000 election, she came out as gung-ho pro-Israel. Given her past, that was more surprising than her embrace of the Yankees.

■ Geert Wilders had a busy month, with little or no time to focus on his duties as a member of the Dutch parliament and leader of the Party for Freedom. He’s really a single-issue politician, with the platform that Islam is less a religion than a totalitarian ideology like Communism or fascism. *Fitna* (the Arabic for strife or sedition) is a short documentary film of his,

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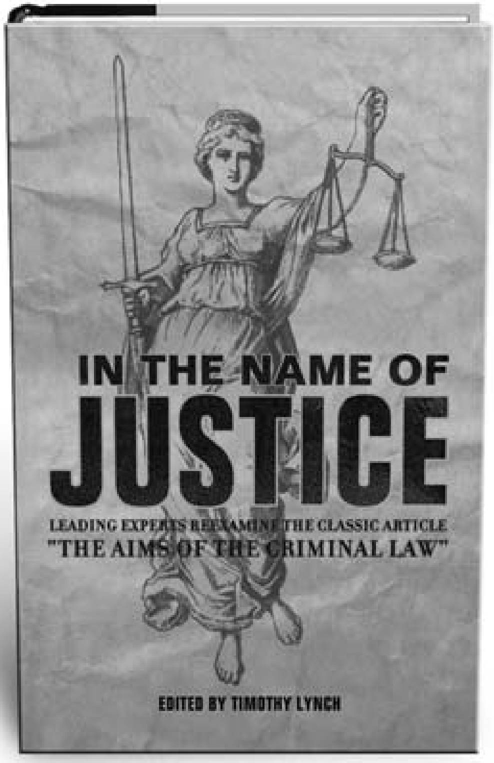
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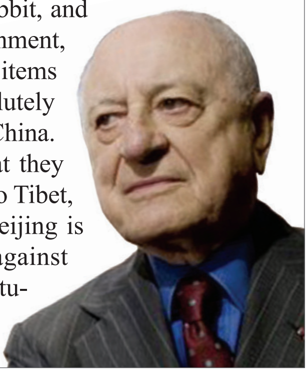
"THE AIMS OF THE CRIMINAL LAW"
EDITED BY TIMOTHY LYNCH

whose purpose is to link acts of jihadi terror to the Koran and its injunctions. In Rome, he received a prize named in honor of Oriana Fallaci, the late Italian journalist who was every bit as critical of the Islamization of Europe. He also accepted an invitation to show the film in London, in the House of Lords no less, but was refused entry to Britain on the grounds that Muslims were threatening to react to his presence with violence. He then visited Washington, where Sen. Jon Kyl sponsored a showing of *Fitna* in the LBJ Room on Capitol Hill. Under the circumstances, the senator's move was a blow for free speech.

■ President Obama and Benjamin Netanyahu are already performing an awkward two-step, and this will determine the future of Israel, the Palestinians, and perhaps the wider Middle East as well. Center-right Netanyahu ideally would like to form a national government with center-left Tzipi Livni, and so present a united front to the new administration in the White House. But Livni so far has refused all offers, obliging Netanyahu to invite other, more right-wing and nationalist parties into the governing coalition. In the likely event that such a coalition proves unwilling to make major concessions to the Palestinians, American displeasure will be manifest, and Livni's chance may then come. In the past Netanyahu was damaged when Bill Clinton's dislike of him became public knowledge. Anxious to avoid a repeat with Obama, he has been quick to say that their two recent meetings were "excellent." But Obama's entire Middle East team is preparing to push Netanyahu into peace processes of their own devising, satisfying the demands of Syria, the Palestinian Authority, and even Hamas at the expense of Israeli security. Wishful thinking appears set to trump pragmatic politics once again.

■ Pierre Bergé was the life partner of Yves St. Laurent, the late fashion designer. He was auctioning many of their possessions at Christie's. And these included two sculptures from China: a bronze head of a rabbit, and another of a rat. The Chinese government, for its part, angrily claimed these items as its own. Bergé said, "I am absolutely ready to give these two heads to China. All I ask of China in return is that they grant human rights, give freedom to Tibet, and welcome the Dalai Lama." Beijing is busy taking all the steps it can against Christie's. And we are busy congratulating M. Bergé.



REUTERS

■ One of history's quaintest mathematical curiosities is the Indiana pi bill of 1897. Introduced in the state's lower chamber by Rep. T. I. Record, the bill declared the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter to be either 3.2, or 4, or sixteen-sevenths of the square root of two, whichever section of the bill was taken to be applicable in any case. The bill unfortunately died in committee. Its spirit has been revived next door in Illinois, however, where the state senate has unanimously approved a bill declaring Pluto a planet. This is in defiance of the International Astronomical Union, which downgraded Pluto to a "dwarf planet" in 2006 and a "plutoid" in 2008. The Illinois legislators were moved by affection for a native son, Clyde Tombaugh, who discovered Pluto in 1930. The day of that discovery, March 13, will henceforth be Pluto Day in the Land of Lincoln. The Hoosiers—and, so far as we know, all other jurisdictions—are still stuck with pi at a tad over 3.14159 and Pi Day at March 14 (3/14, see?).

■ "Livestock-emissions research" is a fast-growing topic among global-warming propagandists. We have reported before in this space on the planet-threatening issue of bovine flatulence, which releases methane—a greenhouse gas—into the atmosphere. But scientists in New Zealand think they may have been concentrating on the wrong animal, and the wrong end. The belching of sheep, we are now told, is at least as deleterious to the environment. After the borborygmi of beeves and the eructations of ewes, what's next on the barnyard-threat agenda? Horse halitosis? Pig perspiration? Can't domesticated livestock be left as in our childhood books and songs, friends to man? Did Old MacDonald have a Livestock Emissions Researcher on his farm? Feugh!

■ Squeamish readers might want to skip this paragraph, in which we pass on a sudden flush of news stories relating to . . . *evacuation*. Item: Environmentalists are promoting urine-diversion toilet bowls, which have two outlets—number one and number two, so to speak. The snag is that males have to sit for both functions. Item: While gents must now sit for the lesser function, ladies need not. GoGirl, a popular product with feminists, allows women to relieve themselves while standing. Item: Soft toilet tissue can be made only from wood, not from recycled paper. The *New York Times* reports that America's preference for fluffiness destroys untold acres of forest annually—"the Charmin effect." Those same environmentalists urge us to switch to "reusable wipes" (think of old-fashioned cloth diapers). Item: Ryanair, a budget airline serving the U.K., is considering charging passengers one British pound to use the loo in flight. What are things coming to? Men sit; women stand; wipes are reusable; and all must pay. The world is upside-down—the position Ben Franklin experimented with to lessen the pain of his kidney stones while urinating. Let's hope the busybodies don't try to make us do *that*.

■ The first week in March was No Cussing Week in Los Angeles County, the nation's most populous. This was the inspiration of McKay Hatch, a 15-year-old at South Pasadena High. He started the No Cussing Club when he was in junior high. Cussing was omnipresent and demoralizing, he thought. And club members "could help each other by reminding and supporting each other not to cuss." Soon, other clubs sprouted, throughout the country and even the world. McKay and his fellows have received some harassment: Some people are offended at their commitment, and express their feelings, sadly, in the terms one would expect.

■ Fr. Francis Canavan, S.J., was a Jesuit of the old school; he had little time for the theological heterodoxy and left-wing political radicalism for which his order became notorious in the last century. He was a brilliant scholar: a respected professor of government at Fordham and an associate editor at *America* magazine. He was perhaps best known as an authority on the writings of Edmund Burke, and his essays on politics embody a Burkean suspicion of the philosophical underpinnings of the liberal project. Above all, as those who knew him can attest, he was a man of great personal holiness. Dead at 91. R.I.P.

■ Wilbert Tatum was a newspaper publisher who made his mark with imaginary news: His Harlem-based *New York Amsterdam News* played a key role in furthering the Tawana Brawley hoax. Ignoring emergent facts, Tatum exploited the tall tale for inflammatory purposes well past the time when its fraudulence was debatable. Married to a Jewish refugee, he nonetheless trafficked opportunistically in anti-Semitic paranoia, explaining Sen. Joseph Lieberman's vice-presidential nomination as an appeal to Jewish lucre: "Gore and his minions did it for the money." His newspaper helped poison black-Jewish relations leading up to the Crown Heights riots, denounced "white-bread naysayers," and cultivated the careers of Louis Farrakhan and Al Sharpton. As a consequence of the publisher's taste for fiction, Tatum's newspaper left its readers knowing less than they did before. A regrettable career comes to a close. Wilbert Tatum, dead at 76. R.I.P.

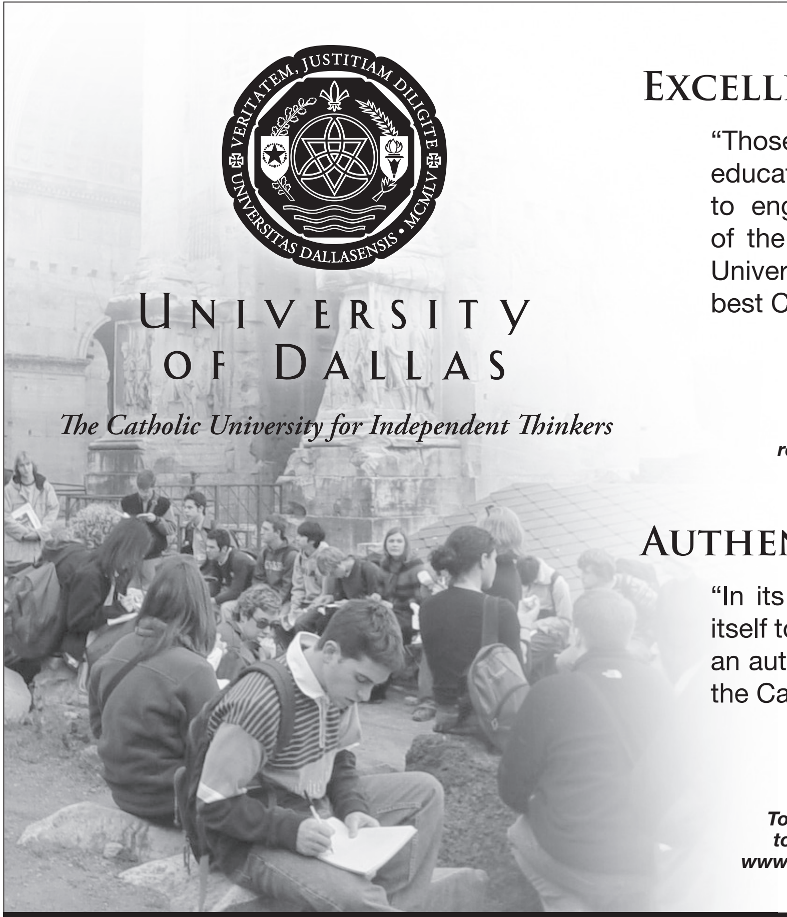
■ "Surprised by joy," William Wordsworth turned to share it with his daughter Catharine, only to realize with a double shock, as memory caught up with reality, that she was dead. How many times over the last year have we been surprised—by the success of the surge, the financial collapse, Obama's hubris and liberals' infatuation with it—and thought, "What will WFB think about this?" only to remember that he is gone. Death stops even a commentator as tireless as Bill. Time makes the moments of shock for the living less frequent, and less sharp. We are left with his voluminous recorded thoughts, many pertinent to any day's events, many timeless, and with our loving memories, which bind us over a distance, until, God willing, we rejoin him once more.

THE BUDGET

LBJ Returns

PERHAPS there is nothing in President Obama's budget that better illustrates his priorities than his proposal to cap deductions on money donated to charity. "Don't worry about giving," this proposal seems to say. "That's what the government is for."

Taking, too. Obama's budget increases taxes by $1.3 trillion. On the giving side, it increases discretionary spending by 12 percent and makes a $634 billion down payment on a national health-care system. Obama leaves the details of the



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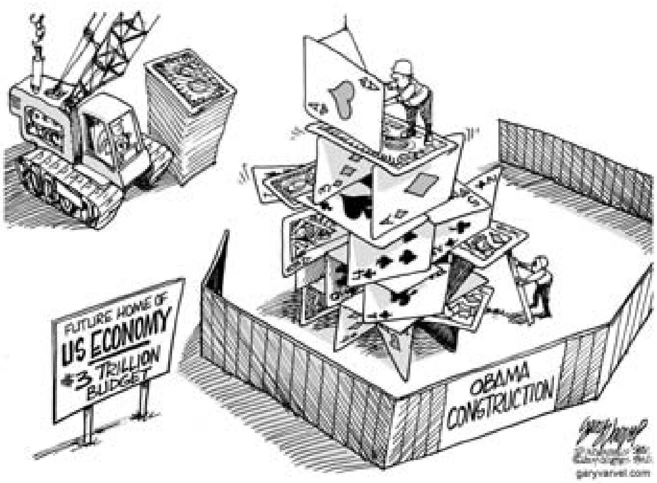
system to Democrats in Congress, but he is specific about how to pay for it: He would cap itemized deductions for those in the top income-tax bracket and simultaneously raise their tax rates. The idea seems to be: Turn more of your money over to us, and we'll give it away for you.

While Obama's tax increases will almost certainly become law, his spending cuts will almost certainly not—particularly in the case of agriculture. Obama says he will save $10 billion by capping payments to wealthy farmers and billions more by scrapping other costly and inefficient farm programs. But don't tell that to Rep. Collin C. Peterson, the Minnesota Democrat who chairs the House Agriculture Committee. "We just finished the [latest five-year] farm bill last year, and I don't think we'll open it up," he informed the *Washington Times*. If Obama had really wanted to reform farm subsidies, he would have taken a stand when it mattered and voted against that bill in the Senate. Instead, he supported the subsidizers.

For his other proposed cuts to take effect, Obama will have to make credible threats to veto appropriations bills that increase spending where he has called for decreases. If he is able to pull this off, we will be among the first to congratulate him. But neither party has an outstanding record of controlling spending when it controls both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, and judging by the bloated bulk of the stimulus bill there is little reason for optimism that Obama-era Democrats will fare better than their predecessors. In fact, Obama's spending increases are larger than the new revenue from his tax hikes. His deficit-reduction plan is to hope that the economy improves.

What spending cuts we are likely to see are not necessarily ones that we should cheer. Obama would fund his health-care plan in part by gutting Medicare Advantage, the program that lets seniors choose privately administered health-care plans that are paid for by Medicare. Eliminating Medicare Advantage has been a liberal priority for years, because it is a roadblock to instituting a single-payer system. Obama promised to go through the budget "line by line," looking for spending to cut. But in this task, as in others, he has sought the path of least resistance. The Left's sacred cows appear to be safe.

In short, Obama's budget raises taxes, increases spending, and creates programs that are likely to put a drag on our economy, such as cap-and-trade. Democrats like to point to Bill Clinton's tax increases in the early 1990s as evidence that higher taxes are not incompatible with growth. But Clinton's hikes coincided with the advent of the Internet, a revolutionary new technology that boosted productivity. What's more, Clinton signed several growth-promoting trade agreements—good luck getting such a policy out of today's "Buy American" Democrats. Unfortunately, Obama is adopting Clinton's worst economic policies (high taxes, government-run health care) and eschewing his best ones.



GLOBAL WARMING

Tax and Spin

George Stephanopoulos did the nation a small service recently when he got President Obama's budget director to admit that the cap-and-trade provision in the current budget will increase energy prices for most Americans.

If it becomes law, this provision will have the government set a quota for total U.S. greenhouse-gas emissions and then sell the ration cards to companies that emit them. In all but name, this is a tax on fossil fuels. It is projected to collect about $650 billion between 2012 and 2019.

According to the budget-preview document, the revenues from the hidden climate tax will be split between $15 billion for alternative-energy-research subsidies and about $52 billion per year to help pay for the "Making Work Pay" tax cut/welfare check of $800 for "95 percent of all American workers." Of course, the same people receiving these checks will now pay more for gas, utilities, and every product they buy that has material energy content. How much more? According to Iain Murray of the Competitive Enterprise Institute, the typical family should expect to pay about $870 more per year, almost exactly offsetting the check from the government.

So the net fiscal effect of the combined program of cap-and-trade and Making Work Pay is for the federal government to take about $75 billion per year surreptitiously with one hand, cycle it through the government apparatus, and give most of it back through explicit checks to individuals with the other hand—with a mere $15 billion per year siphoned off to fund Son of SynFuels. Not to be crassly political, but it will also have the effect of transferring wealth from states that disproportionately vote for Republicans to those that disproportionately vote for Democrats. We suspect there might be some administrative costs involved as well.

The theoretical benefit of all of this activity is to ameliorate climate-change costs by reducing greenhouse-gas emissions. As we have argued previously, this is, even in the theoretical case, cost-prohibitive. Further, the practical reality is that the amount of emissions reductions that this measure will achieve in isolation is trivial. Proponents argue that by preemptively limiting our emissions (and therefore reducing our negotiating leverage) we will increase our ability to convince China, India, and other major developing nations to sacrifice economic growth by joining a global regime of emissions reduction. They are invited to our regular office poker game.

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The Pride of the Liberals

'What don't you understand? We won.'

BY RAMESH PONNURU

SOMETIMES political movements, as they grow old, become arrogant, insular, and dismissive of criticism. Critics said that the conservative ascendancy of the last few decades succumbed to that disease, and there is more truth in it than conservatives would like to admit. What we are seeing in Washington, D.C., right now is different: President Obama and his supporters are showing early symptoms of this syndrome in the first flush of victory. The liberal ascendancy is already becoming a liberal complacency.

In part this tendency reflects the character of the new president, a preternaturally self-confident man. His ambition to remake American policy and politics is staggering. His agenda for just his first year in office includes a fiscal stimulus unprecedented in size, a push for a new energy economy, and the revamping of American health care. That ambition may wreck his presidency, or it may make him the world-historical figure he aspires to be. But what is more troubling is the unwarranted intellectual self-confidence that liberalism in the age of Obama increasingly exhibits.

The debate over the economic-stimulus plan illustrated the point. When that plan was criticized, President Obama, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Senate majority whip Dick Durbin all resorted nearly immediately to the "argument" that they had won the election. It is of course true that a lot of Democrats won their elections and that they will consequently get their way in most policy disputes. Yet they—and liberals generally—seem oddly exercised by the continued resistance to their policies by the small and relatively powerless minority that elected Republicans now constitute.

My favorite liberal magazine, *The New Republic*, is now regularly running items in which the authors appear scandalized by the fact of dissent from Obama's agenda. Opinion journalism in D.C. is a small world, and many of these journalists are friendly acquaintances of mine. It is not my intention to portray them as arrogant know-it-alls in any personal respect. But they do seem to assume that they know all kinds of things that nobody knows or can know.

The rightness of the idea that the stimulus would, in fact, stimulate the economy—that there would be more economic activity if it were enacted than if it were not—was taken as inarguable. Thus Noam Scheiber argued that the stimulus debate boiled down to "an engineering question" with an "objectively right answer," namely Obama's answer. "There really isn't much debate about this among economists," he added. Never mind Robert Barro, Martin Feldstein, Greg Mankiw, Gary Becker, James Buchanan, and Ed Prescott, all of them respected economists who opposed the stimulus, either because they are skeptical of stimulus generally or because they doubt Obama's stimulus in particular.

The debate featured regular invocations of the alleged consensus of most economists that the stimulus was necessary, although the country has a lot of economists and nobody to my knowledge surveyed them. Not all economists accept the Keynesian theoretical model that underpins the stimulus. Many believe that federal borrowing will crowd out private investment. The libertarian economic journalist Megan McArdle points out that in practice the theory that a massive jolt of federal spending will revive a slumping economy has been tested three times: in the U.S. during the 1930s, in the U.S. again during World War II, and in Japan in the 1990s. These three trials have yielded only one (ambiguous) success.

It is not absurd to think that the stimulus might prove stimulative: Smart economists think that it will, and they have a plausible theory for their view. It is, however, a controvertible view. Those who disagree with it are not necessarily dolts, and its adherents do not prove their case by insisting ever more loudly that they are right. (Which, come to think of it, describes Paul Krugman's tone on too many days.)

E. J. Dionne Jr., the liberal *Washington Post* columnist, wrote in January that "being empirical is in the progressive interest," and not just on the stimulus, because empirical evidence supports progressives' views. That argument has in recent years been forcefully pressed by Scheiber's *New Republic* colleague Jonathan Chait. If it were true, we would have to believe that (for example) opposition to school choice and trade agreements ineluctably follows from any dispassionate review of the relevant evidence rather than from liberal ideology.

It would also be a remarkable testament to liberals' immunity from the vices that afflict other fallible, limited, and biased human beings. Most liberals who follow the issue closely—notably Obama's budget director, Peter Orszag—seem to have persuaded themselves that we have no

ROMAN GENN

entitlement crisis, but rather a health-cost crisis: If the federal government brings the cost of health care down, it will not face any budgetary crisis. Entitlement reform is thus unnecessary, (liberal) health-care reform vital. This view rests, ultimately, on confidence that experts know how fast health-care costs are going to rise for decades into the future. It seems at least possible that liberals have this confidence because it gives them a license to do what they want to do anyway.

The Obama administration, backed by most liberals, is also unduly confident that its plans will, in fact, restrain health-care spending. Here the assumption is that near-universal health-insurance coverage can be achieved at a cost saving. The federal government need only do research on the most cost-effective practices and use its vast bargaining power to encourage their adoption. Yet we have had several decades of unrelieved failure at the attempt to cut costs in federal health programs through better management. This time we are to believe that the controls will work with no perverse side effects. This time industry lobbying will not get Congress or regulators to back down from efficiency measures. Sure.

Another thing liberals think they know is that government needs to mandate reductions in carbon emissions (or strongly discourage them through taxes). They are confident both that they can at least roughly estimate the appropriate level of carbon emissions and that this level can be achieved in a cost-effective manner. They act as though they believe that the wisdom of carbon-emissions restrictions follows simply and logically from the existence of global warming. It is a faith-based policy, sometimes advanced with religious zeal.

David Brooks, no reflexive foe of government activism, has recently sung the praises of "epistemological modesty"—modesty, that is, about how much we know and how much we can know, particularly about the reverberating effects of government policy on human behavior. The absence of this trait in our current crop of leaders is our most alarming deficit.

As Brooks noted, the need for intellectual humility is a characteristically conservative theme that can be found from Burke onward (not to mention in religious literature). It must of course be admitted that conservatives have not always shown such humility. We are often said, especially these days, to have excessive faith in the market.

Three points should be made about this criticism. The first is that "faith in the market," even when taken too far, as it can be, is generally not faith that some group of people have all the right answers. It is confidence that trial and error, feedback loops, competition, and decentralized knowledge will come closer and closer to the right answers. Friedrich von Hayek's Nobel lecture urged policymakers to emulate gardeners rather than engineers, creating the environment for growth rather than trying to bring it about directly.

The second is that the notion that conservatives' free-market views are now wholly discredited is itself a species of contemporary liberal hubris. When Leon Wieseltier asserts, also in *The New Republic*, that "the cause of all this misery was the market abandon that [Republicans] promoted so messianically," or Jacob Weisberg writes in *Newsweek* that the financial crisis has proven economic libertarianism wrong, they are not saying merely that the conservative analysis of the role of loose monetary policy, credit subsidies, and accounting rules is mistaken. They are saying that this analysis is outside the realm of reasonable discussion. It need not even be considered.

The third and most important point is that when conservatives have abandoned epistemological modesty it has led them to some of their greatest errors. In 1993, conservatives reacted to Bill Clinton's tax increases not by saying that they would cause economic growth to be moderately lower than it would otherwise have been but by predicting that they would lead to ruin. They thus made themselves look foolish. More consequentially, in this decade conservatives largely failed to foresee the difficulty of stabilizing Iraq. The fact that conservatives have erred in this fashion should be no great comfort to liberals.

Writer Peter Beinart argued in January that his fellow liberals should temper their self-confidence by admitting that they were wrong about the surge. They had been "proven right too many times" for their own good. It says a lot about the current liberal mindset that Beinart's article must be counted, in context, as a wise bit of caution.

Hubris is supposed to lead to nemesis. When it will come, in what form it will come, and in what proportion the suffering will be borne by liberals and by those whom they govern, are three more of those things that we cannot know. **NR**

Great Society II

With a budget proposal, Obama's governing philosophy comes fully into view

BY JAMES C. CAPRETTA

PRES. BARACK OBAMA, we are told, takes great pride in his facility with the written and spoken word, and perhaps justifiably so. He has, after all, authored two bestselling books (on himself), and is routinely praised by the media for being an exceptional orator.

Indeed, it is this particularly gifted way with words that seems partially to explain the ongoing confusion over his true political identity. It was well known and widely reported prior to the 2008 election that then-Senator Obama had achieved, during his brief time in national office, a more liberal voting record than any of his Democratic colleagues. Still, voters who had previously pulled the lever largely for Republican candidates cast their ballots for him in great numbers. No matter the clear record—many Americans were convinced that Obama would, if he won the presidency, govern from the center because, well, he sounded so moderate and reasonable in his speeches.

In the early days of the new administration, the president continued to use phrases and push themes that left conflicting impressions about the basic direction of his governing game plan. In his inaugural address, he said the question he would ask was not whether government is too big or too small, but whether it "works," thus siding with the pragmatic over the theoretical. He also announced his intention to appoint a high-level "chief performance officer" to lead an effort to transform government into a model of efficiency, with a line-by-line review of every agency to eliminate wasteful and unnecessary spending. He even signaled, to the chagrin of liberal bloggers, a vague interest in bipartisan reform of the nation's entitlement programs to put the

Mr. Capretta, a fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, was an associate director of the Office of Management and Budget from 2001 to 2004.

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About Your Professor

Dr. Robert Bucholz, D.Phil., is Associate Professor of History at Loyola University of Chicago. He received his undergraduate education in history at Cornell University and his doctorate in modern history from Oxford University.

Professor Bucholz has received several awards for his teaching, including the Sujack Award for Teaching Excellence, the highest such award presented by the Loyola College of Arts and Sciences, and the Honors Program Faculty Member of the Year Award in both 1998 and 1999.

He is the author or coauthor of three books, including *The Augustan Court: Queen Anne and the Decline of Court Culture*.

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Napoleon Bonaparte on the battlefield.

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country's long-term fiscal house in order.

All of this reinforced the carefully cultivated persona of someone who could bridge old divides and unite the country in a post-partisan era of problem solving.

Then came his budget plan, which removed all doubt about where the president would like to lead the country. It seems likely that, years from now, this first budget submission will be marked as the moment when the president's aggressively liberal governing philosophy finally came into full view. His budget would impose massive new taxes on entrepreneurs and upper-income households; redistribute much of the new revenue collected to others through scores of new government programs and special tax provisions; rapidly increase spending by nearly every agency of government; micromanage the energy and health sectors in ways never tried before in this country; and run up the public debt just as the baby-boom generation is about to swell the government's retirement and health-care costs.

Though all of this is readily seen in the budget's revenue and spending figures, the Obama administration nonetheless tried to couch it in the soothing language of fiscal conservatism. In his speech before Congress, the president said his team had found "$2 trillion in savings" over ten years with their sharp, budget-cutting pencils. But, even before the budget's official release just two days later, it was clear that this claim was a mirage. The "savings" stemmed mainly from the assumption that, in a status quo scenario, war-fighting costs in Iraq would remain at essentially "surge" levels in perpetuity, which no one has ever thought would be the case. That false assumption alone added $1.4 trillion to the "baseline" against which the Obama team measured itself.

But it didn't matter anyway. This budgetary sleight of hand couldn't disguise what even the mainstream press recognized: The Obama budget, if adopted, would run up the nation's debt at an unprecedented pace—some $7 trillion between 2009 and 2019. No matter what baseline it's measured against, that's a lot of borrowing. At the end of 2008, before the full force of the financial crisis had hit government tax collections, the entire debt, accumulated over more than two centuries, stood at only $5.8 trillion. In 2007, at the end of the government expansion that marked much of the Bush era, the federal budget deficit fell to a comparatively insignificant $161 billion, or just 1.2 percent of GDP. By contrast, the lowest annual budget deficit in the Obama plan would be $533 billion in 2013, or 3 percent of GDP.

This massive run-up of debt cannot be explained away with a continuing weak economy. In the run-up to the passage of the so-called stimulus bill, the president spoke incessantly of the financial crisis and the likely economic troubles that lie ahead. We won't dig ourselves out of the problem easily or quickly, he warned. But the budget he submitted to Congress now predicts otherwise. Robust economic growth is expected to resume in 2010 for good. Indeed, in 2012, the administration projects real GDP will increase an astonishing 4.6 percent, three years into a recovery.

If anemic growth isn't to blame for the Obama deficits, what is? It's simple: spending. For all the talk of combing through the budget for savings, President Obama is planning an unprecedented expansion of government, with just about every agency and program in line for a major bump-up in funding. In 2008, total federal spending was $3 trillion. In 2013, after the financial crisis is expected to have subsided and economic growth to be in full swing, the president's budget, including his health-care plan, forecasts spending of about $4 trillion—a $1 trillion, or 33 percent, increase in the size of government in just five years.

And the spending is pretty much for anything and everything. Child-nutrition programs, Pell Grants (an 80 percent increase by 2014), national-service scholarships, state welfare grants, job training, disease prevention, research, agency overhead, and on and on. The State Department (and related international funding) would nearly double in size in five years; the Education Department would grow by more than 60 percent. Overall, annual appropriations spending would increase by $780 billion over the coming decade.

To partially finance all of this new spending, the Obama budget would impose a massive tax hike on upper-income households. Those with incomes exceeding $250,000 per year would see their tax rate on ordinary income jump from 36 percent to 39.6 percent, and on capital gains from 15 percent to 20 percent. They would also lose some of the value of their personal exemption and itemized deductions, including charitable contributions and home-mortgage interest expenses. All in all, President Obama wants to increase taxes on the nation's high earners and successful entrepreneurs by nearly $1 trillion over the coming decade. And that doesn't count their share of the $645 billion ten-year tax associated with the administration's "cap and trade" environmental program.

In his radio address on February 28, the president signaled that he understood his budget proposal marked a turning point in his early presidency. Gone were the soothing words of bipartisanship and moderation. He didn't offer to negotiate or compromise. Rather, he warned his opponents that his budget submission to Congress was making good on the promise to bring about sweeping change. In effect, he was claiming an electoral mandate for the budget he proposed.

But did voters really have this—essentially the Great Society II—in mind when they voted last November?

Then, as now, the overwhelming issue was the severe economic contraction sweeping the country. The Obama campaign moved decisively ahead of Sen. John McCain in late September as it became clear that the downward spiral, which had started in the financial sector, was accelerating rapidly and threatening widespread job losses. The change a fearful public wanted then, and wants today, is whatever will break the cycle and restore private-sector growth.

Despite the rhetoric, the vast majority of the new spending and tax provisions in the Obama budget plan, including provisions enacted in the stimulus bill, will have no bearing whatsoever on the prospects for reversing the current downturn. As Fed chairman Ben Bernanke recently testified, growth will resume later this year or early next if and only if the problems of toxic assets and frozen credit are resolved in the financial sector. That's what caused the problem in the first place, and its resolution remains the complex missing ingredient for jump-starting a recovery.

The president has strong working majorities in both chambers of Congress, so it is entirely possible that his budget will pass largely intact, thus changing the trajectory of government for some years to come. But it is also possible that a public expecting moderation and centrism will be startled by the aggressively liberal economic agenda their new president is pushing. If that happens, the administration may come to regret its massive budgetary overreach in the same way the Clinton administration came to regret its early missteps on health care. **NR**

You deserve a factual look at . . .

Jerusalem (II)

Should the U.S. Embassy be moved to the capital of Israel?

In a previous clarifying message we showed that before the Six-Day War in 1967, the claim that Jerusalem was a Muslim/Arab city had seldom been asserted and that such claim had come about only in modern times. The status of Jerusalem continues to be of great importance. The Arabs clamorously insist that at least the eastern part of the city should be yielded to them. The Israelis insist that Jerusalem continue as the indivisible capital of their country.

What are the facts?

Jerusalem – reunited and indivisible. Ever since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, all American governments and Congress have confirmed their conviction that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and that, once reunited, it should remain indivisible.

Before the Six-Day War in 1967 the city was divided, the Jordanians having occupied the eastern part since the War of Liberation in 1948. During their 19-year reign, all Jewish residents were driven out and all Jewish places of worship closed or destroyed. The various Christian denominations operated under the strict control of Muslim authorities.

> “The status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state.”

All this ended in 1967 with the liberation of all of Jerusalem by the Israel Defense Forces and with the reunification of the city. Access to all holy places became available to all. The many religious bodies in the holy city (and in all of Israel) are able to pursue their activities without any restrictions. Jerusalem is today truly a free and open city. Just as the whole world rejoiced when the ugly wall dividing Berlin was torn down, so do we rejoice that the wall, the barbed wire and the machine gun emplacements dividing the city were finally torn down.

U.S. Embassy not in Israel’s capital. While the Palestinians lay claim to the eastern part of Jerusalem and wish it to become the capital of a hoped-for Palestinian state, nobody, not even the Arabs, questions the western part of the city to be Israeli. It is remarkable therefore that, despite this universal recognition, the United States has steadfastly insisted on placing and keeping its embassy in Tel Aviv, the major commercial city, instead of in Jerusalem, Israel’s capital and the seat of the Knesset (parliament), the Supreme Court, and of all government offices. It is as if a government accredited to the United States were to insist on keeping its embassy in, say, New York, rather than in Washington D.C.

With the U.S. in the lead, all other countries have also located their embassies in Tel Aviv. It is a bizarre situation. All ambassadors and their staffs must make almost daily trips to Jerusalem because no government business is conducted in Tel Aviv. Our country maintains diplomatic relations with over 150 countries. In all of them, the U.S. Embassy is located in the respective nation’s designated capital. The only exception is Israel where, so far, our government has insisted on locating its embassy in a city other than the capital.

Congress in favor of moving embassy to Jerusalem. Leaders of Congress – both Republicans and Democrats – have passed legislation by which the U.S. Embassy would have to be moved to Jerusalem. That legislation has been endorsed by 93 Senators. The President, however, may delay the transfer to Jerusalem if he deems that the national interest demands it. The U.S. has a lease on a 10-acre lot in Talpiot, a totally Jewish neighborhood in West Jerusalem. It is to be hoped, therefore that before too long, reality will prevail and that the U.S. Embassy will indeed be located in Jerusalem – the capital of one of its closest allies.

Prior to their election, both Presidents Bush and President Clinton assured the public that the U.S. Embassy would be moved to Jerusalem. But in the end, they blocked such action. We must hope that President Obama will, at long last, fulfill this wish of Congress, which is therefore also the wish of the American people, and that he will order that the U.S. Embassy be moved to Jerusalem.

The main reason given for not moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem is that it would violate “Arab sensitivities.” That might indeed be the case. But while there would be some posturing, none of the Arab states could afford to do much else. Egypt would certainly not refuse its yearly multi-billion dollar subsidy from Washington. King Abdullah of Jordan would not jeopardize the political and financial lifeline that the U.S. has extended to him. Saudi Arabia would make some perfunctory noises, but that would be just about all. The status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state. The move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem will signal once and for all that there will be no U.S. or world support for the division of Jerusalem and for the establishment – in any part of it – as the capital of a new Arab state.

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Negroponte Talks

A capable man for a dangerous world

BY JAY NORDLINGER

"I DON'T know if you know my reputation, but I was never a good source," says John Negroponte—a good source for journalists, that is. I do know his reputation. A longtime diplomat, entrusted with many crucial posts, he has always been tightlipped with the Fourth Estate. But now he is in the private sector, and in a better position to talk. Obviously, he has plenty to offer.

Here he is on Iran and nukes (and remember that, only two years ago, he was director of national intelligence): "I think that's what they want, I think that's what they're headed towards, I think that's what they're going to get." Shortly after he became DNI in 2005, his office estimated that Iran would have a weapon sometime between 2010 and 2015. "I don't believe that that assessment has essentially changed," says Negroponte.

But don't we have the means to stop the Iranians? "I think we can delay them through sanctions, through import restrictions, through working with other countries. But definitively stop them? Even if you used coercive means, I think it would be quite difficult by now." In 1981, Israel took out Iraq's nuclear reactor, ending Iraq's nuclear program for some time. Iran is a different story, however: Its nuclear facilities are likely to be many and dispersed. "Iran is a big country with a substantial scientific community," says Negroponte, and the country "has aspired to nuclear capability since the time of the shah."

Refresh yourself on Negroponte's career: He was the top aide to Kissinger for Vietnam. He was ambassador in Honduras, Mexico, and the Philippines. He was assistant secretary of state and deputy national security adviser. (This was under Reagan.) Later he was U.N. ambassador, ambassador in Iraq, DNI (the first ever), and deputy secretary of state. The last four posts were under George W. Bush. Negroponte is one of those who have been everywhere, known everybody, done everything.

He now works for McLarty Associates, a consulting firm in Washington—the McLarty being Mack McLarty, President Clinton's first chief of staff (and a man—another man—from Hope, Ark.). Negroponte's office contains some photos—just a few—from his far-flung career: There he is as a young man with Chou En-lai, for example. You will find Negroponte a very tall, large, imposing man, with a striking bald head: He looks like a figure on a classical coin.

He was born in 1939, to Greek parents. And he had an elite education: the Phillips Exeter Academy and Yale. Negroponte majored in political science, and spent his junior year abroad—at the "Sciences Po" in Paris. On the Yale campus itself, one of his teachers was Willmoore Kendall, the notorious political philosopher, and an early figure in NATIONAL REVIEW. One day, Kendall handed back some assignment to him, saying, "Negroponte, I've given only one better grade in this course, in all the years I've been teaching it, and that was to William F. Buckley."

When coming of age, Negroponte admired Franklin Roosevelt, enormously. He also admired Truman—particularly for his decisiveness. Negroponte joined the Foreign Service just before the 1960 election. "And if they hadn't lost my absentee ballot somewhere in the bowels of the State Department, I would have voted for Kennedy. I considered myself a Democrat until Ronald Reagan came along, and then I switched political affiliation." That was true of millions of Americans. But Negroponte was never a partisan: As a professional diplomat, he thought he had no right to be.

Of his time with Kissinger, working on the Vietnam War, he will not speak. But there have been many published reports about this experience. They say that Negroponte was appalled at what the United States was doing: in effect, selling out the South—piddling away a war that was, in fact, winnable. Negroponte broke sharply with Kissinger. And, from a prized and exalted perch, he went to a relative backwater: Quito, Ecuador. But there began a significant Latin American career.

In 1981, Negroponte became ambassador to Honduras. His critics—belonging to the Dodd/Kerry school—say that he was a conductor of the Reagan administration's "dirty wars." His supporters say that he was part of the team that beat back extreme Left and extreme Right to foster democratization in the region. Negroponte remembers the charge that Tip O'Neill made: that Reagan would not be happy until there were U.S. troops in Central America. But the opposite was true. "That's why we did the covert stuff that we did."

Today, democracy looks shaky in Latin America, with the rise of Chávez and others. But Negroponte points out that "we're a hell of a lot better off than we were 30 years ago." Mexico is not a one-party state anymore, and Colombia is "a fabulous success story," despite severe challenges. Latin American democracy is doing well enough, says Negroponte. The problem is, it is not yet consolidated: A struggle is going on whose outcome we cannot yet see.

And he says something interesting about President Bush and Chávez: "I think one of the great things Mr. Bush did was not give Hugo Chávez the satisfaction of reacting to his various provocations. My sense is that that bothered Chávez. I don't think Mr. Bush ever mentioned his name, frankly"—and that was an appropriate approach.

Negroponte went to the U.N. in 2001. And it was in February 2003 that Secretary of State Colin Powell made his fateful presentation on Iraq and weapons of mass destruction. Negroponte, the ambassador, was sitting right behind him. He says, "We all believed there were WMD. There was no effort to pull the wool over anybody's eyes, as far as I'm aware." Powell, Negroponte, and CIA director George Tenet had gone over the evidence with a fine-toothed comb the night before. Powell "made a good-faith effort," says Negroponte, but U.S. claims "turned out to be wrong, so there we are."

So, I ask, were we right to invade Iraq? "Look," he says: "I'm very much the realist and the pragmatist. I was not party to the decision, but I saw it coming, and when we went in, and after we'd been there a while, I felt, 'We have to deal with the situation as it is. We've done it, and we have to make the best of it.' And I ended up making a personal contribution—volunteered to go."

As ambassador, that is. Today he is encouraged by what is happening in Iraq. "I hope it doesn't fall apart once we leave, but it sure is a lot better than people expected a couple of years ago. We were all holding our heads in February '06 after the bombing of the Samarra

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Note: GovMint.com is a private distributor of government and private coin and medallic issues and is not affiliated with the United States Government. *Prices and availability subject to change without notice* ©GovMint.com, 2009 mosque. That was terrible. The sectarian violence in Baghdad that ensued was just—tragic. And alarming. Somehow we weathered that," and Iraq actually has a chance to pull it off: to establish a democracy, of some sort, in the heart of the Middle East.

We discuss presidents he has known and worked with, including George W. Bush—whom he saw regularly. "He took his briefing"—which is to say, his intelligence briefing—"very seriously." When Negroponte started as DNI, Bush "had already been president for more than four years, and he knew the international brief cold. It was kind of hard to tell Mr. Bush much that he didn't know. He was a good study. He knew all these leaders very well—he placed a great deal of value on his personal relationships, just like his father." That is something that 43 had in common with 41, Negroponte notes.

Bush himself acknowledged that "he wasn't as good with words as he might have been," Negroponte continues. And one thing this problem did was "mask a great intelligence." He is "a very smart man."

Negroponte has a couple of role models in the diplomatic field, and they were polar opposites, temperamentally: Ellsworth Bunker, so calm, gentlemanly, and dignified; and Philip Habib, high-strung but superb. Talking about national leaders, he cites one who made a particular impression on him: Pres. Fidel Ramos of the Philippines (mid-'90s). "He rolled up his sleeves and got stuff done." A leader on today's scene? Álvaro Uribe of Colombia. What he has done is "really nothing short of amazing."

Negroponte says that probably the hardest post he has ever held was director for Vietnam on the National Security Council staff. That was even harder than the Iraq ambassadorship. I allow that, on a trip to Iraq last fall, I found it difficult not to think about Vietnam: particularly its bitter and horrendous aftermath. "Well, that's my nightmare," says Negroponte: "that we get out too quickly and sort of preemptively give up."

He is a pragmatist, yes, as he has said: but he is certainly not without ideals. He talks about freedom without blushing. Also, he knows that the world is a dangerous place (as another former U.N. ambassador famously said). As long as this is so, we could use men such as Negroponte in crucial posts. **NR**

Pumping Up Joe

When you can't give your vice president an ice bath . . .

BY ROB LONG

Here's how I handle a crying baby: I unwrap it a bit—babies always seem too tightly swaddled, in my opinion—and then I take it outside, into the cold. As the cold air hits the baby's skin, its tiny internal thermostat kicks in, and all the energy formerly devoted to crying and fussing gets channeled into the life-preserving mammal's instinct to keep warm. The poor little thing exhausts itself, nods off, and pipes down.

I mean, that's how I *would* handle a crying baby, if I had kids. (You somehow knew I don't, didn't you?) It's a trick I read about a few years ago, when I started researching 19th-century methods for handling the insane. Apparently, the most popular—and least cruel—approach was the ice bath: plunge the nut into icy water, let his internal temperature drop, pull him out, and as his body furiously cranks up the heat, the result is an exhausted, peaceful collapse. No more screaming, no more frothing, no more insane and irritated rambling.

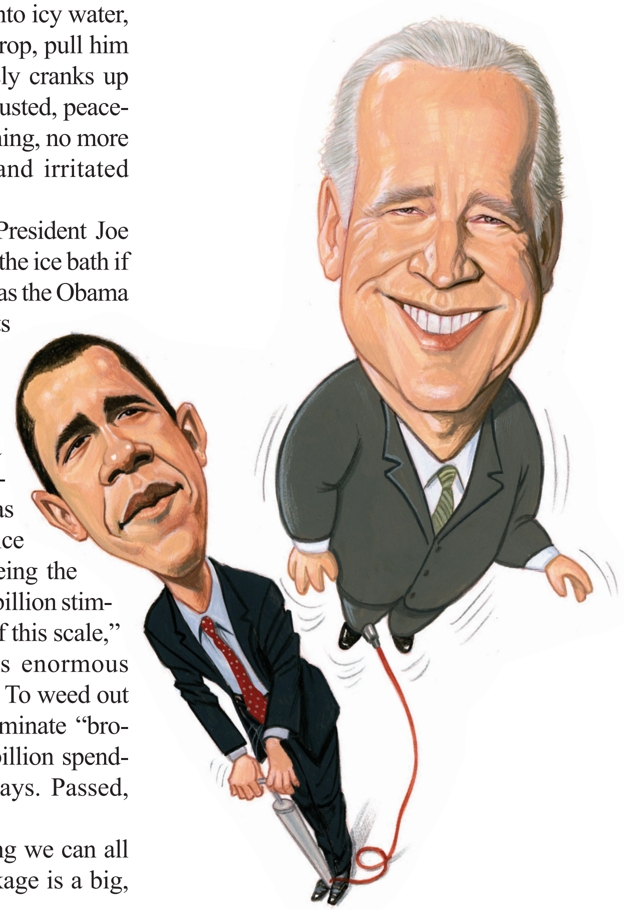
Which brings us to Vice President Joe Biden, who is a candidate for the ice bath if I ever saw one. And it's clear, as the Obama administration approaches its third month, that President Obama agrees with me.

"Nobody messes with Joe," cooed President Obama in his recent address to Congress, announcing that he has assigned his not-quite-sane vice president the task of overseeing the spending of the almost $800 billion stimulus package. "With a plan of this scale," the president said, "comes enormous responsibility to get it right." To weed out "wasteful spending" and eliminate "broken promises." In an $800 billion spending spree. Written in ten days. Passed, unread, by Democrats.

Love it or hate it, one thing we can all agree on: The stimulus package is a big, greasy pile of industrial sausage—chock full of wasteful nonsense, hilarious left-wing 1970s retreads, graft, payola, foolish wish-fulfillment, and pointless grandiosity. It's not a bill; it's a smash-and-grab. It stimulates nothing except contempt. So when President Obama assigned his gaffe-prone, meddlesome, garrulous, and irritating second the tiring, exhausting, doomed ice bath of a job—to supervise the unsupervisable, to clean up the toxic spill that is the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act—I have to admit, I started to like our interesting new president.

Obama was just doing the smart thing: *handling the talent*. That's something we do out here in Hollywood, and it refers to managing the people you need—like actors, who are often insane or wicked or both—in as smoothly efficient a way possible. Gifts; flattery; fraudulent, made-up awards like the People's Choice or the Golden Globes—these are the Hollywood equivalents of the ice bath: safe, non-pharmaceutical ways to tire out troublesome, unfireable people who have, or had, a certain usefulness.

"Nobody messes with Joe," Obama purred, and behind him, beaming, Nutty Joe threw back his head and laughed and



ISMAEL ROLDAN

nodded, as if to say, *Yes, yes, I'm known as a tough character*. This is the same Joe who had been in Congress for almost 40 years, with all of the hackery and go-alonging that entails. This is the same Joe who made so many odd comments and silly observations on the campaign trail that even *Time* magazine's official courtesan to the Obama administration, Joe Klein, had to notice.

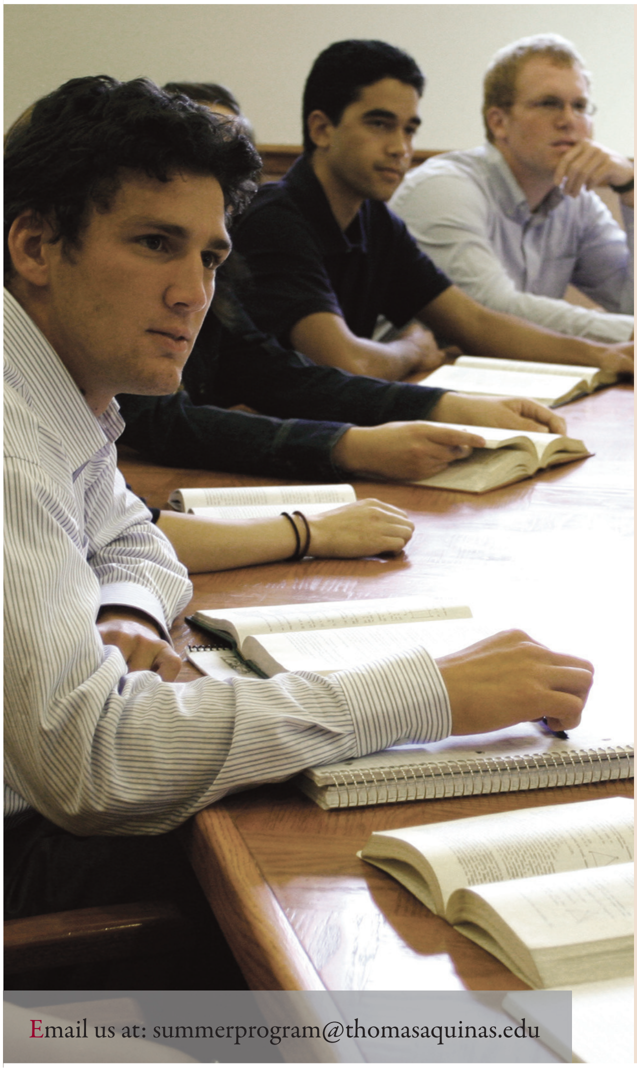
Nobody messes with Joe. It's always alarming when someone compliments you in a way that targets with laser-like precision the sweet spot of your vanity. It's right up there with *Have you lost weight?* and *You're the only one who can really understand Excel* as perfect examples of manipulative flattery.

Nobody messes with Joe? Let me go out on a limb here: *Everybody* messes with Joe. But that's what "Nobody messes with Joe" really means when you're handling the talent. The chief difference between Vice President Joe Biden and a 19th-century lunatic (maybe, in fact, the *only* difference) is that it's sadly against the law to pick up a sitting vice president and plunge him into icy water until his eyelids get heavy. But President Obama has done the next best thing: He has flattered a man deeply susceptible to flattery, saddled him with a job no one could possibly succeed at—indeed, one that his boss (Obama) and his boss's bosses (Reid and Pelosi) don't really care about at all—and in one elegant twist ensured that Vice President Joe Biden is going to be one exhausted little baby.

I can see it now: "I'd really like to be part of the team that crafts Iraq policy," asks the vice president, who has been categorically wrong on Iraq policy for the past six years. "Um, how's that stimulus-package waste stuff going, Joe?" responds the canny president. "Got the whole $800 billion sorted out?"

Meeting over. Not bad. Memo to self, in re: how to handle Biden: *Inflate, then exhaust*.

When Joe Biden heard those lovely, soothing words—*Nobody messes with Joe*—his head bobbed in violent agreement, his teeth flashed, and his face erupted into a wide, laughing grin. Nancy Pelosi, to his left, laughed uproariously too. In a moment, the entire chamber was rollicking with guffaws. *Nobody messes with Joe*. Big laugh line. Poor Joe. He's the only guy in town who can't hear the icemaker. **NR**



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Prime Minister OBAMA

Will European statism supplant the American Way?

BY MARK STEYN

Back during the election campaign, I was on the radio and a caller demanded to know what I made of the persistent rumor that Barack Obama was born in Kenya. "I doubt it," I said. "It's perfectly obvious he was born in Stockholm. Okay, maybe Brussels or Strasbourg." And the host gave an appreciative titter, and I made a mental note to start working up a little "Barack Obama, the first European prime minister to be elected president of the United States" shtick for maybe a year into the first term.

But here we are 20 minutes in, and full-scale Europeanization is already under way: Europeanized health care, Europeanized daycare, Europeanized college education, Europeanized climate-change policy . . . Obama's pseudo-SOTU speech was America's first State of the European Union address, in which the president deftly yoked the language of American exceptionalism to the cause of European statism. Apparently, nothing testifies to the American virtues of self-reliance, entrepreneurial energy, and the can-do spirit like joining the vast army of robotic extras droning in unison: "The government needs to do more for me." For the moment, Washington is offering Euro-sized government with Euro-sized economic intervention, Euro-sized social programs, and Euro-sized regulation. But apparently not Euro-sized taxation.

Hmm. Even the Europeans haven't attempted that trick. But don't worry, if that pledge not to increase taxes on families earning under $250,000 doesn't have quite the Continental sophistication you're looking for in your federal government, I doubt it will be operative very long.

Most Americans don't yet grasp the scale of the Obama project. The naysayers complain, *Oh, it's another Jimmy Carter*, or *It's the new New Deal*, or *It's LBJ's Great Society applied to health care*. You should be so lucky. Forget these parochial nickel'n'dime comparisons. It's all those multiplied a gazillion-fold and nuclearized—or Europeanized, which is less dramatic but ultimately more lethal. For a distressing number of American liberals, the natural condition of an advanced, progressive Western democracy is Scandinavia, and the U.S. has just been taking a wee bit longer to get there. You've probably heard academics talking about "the Swedish model" and carelessly assumed they were referring to the Britt Ekland retrospective on AMC. If only. And, incidentally, fond though I am of Britt, the fact that I can think of no Swedish dolly bird of the last 30 years with which to update that gag is itself a telling part of the problem. Anyway, under the Swedish model, state spending accounts for 54 percent of GDP. In the U.S., it's about 40 percent. Ten years ago, it was 34 percent. So we're trending Stockholmwards.

And why stop there? In Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales, government spending accounts for between 72 and 78 percent of the economy, which is about the best a "free" society can hope to attain this side of complete Sovietization. Fortunately for what's left of America's private sector, "the Welsh model" doesn't have quite the same beguiling euphony as "the Swedish model." Even so, if Scandinavia really is the natural condition of an advanced democracy, then we're all doomed. And by "doomed" I'm not merely making the usual overheated rhetorical flourish in an attempt to persuade you to stick through the rather dry statistics in the next paragraph, but projecting total societal collapse and global conflagration, and all sooner than you think.

There are two basic objections to the wholesale Europeanization of America. The easy one is the economic argument. The short version of late-20th-century history is that Continental Europe entirely missed out on the Eighties boom and its Nineties echo. A couple of weeks back, the evening news shows breathlessly announced that U.S. unemployment had risen to 7 percent, the highest in a decade and a half. Yet the worst American unemployment rate is still better than the best French unemployment rate for that same period. Indeed, for much of the 1990s the EU as a whole averaged an unemployment rate twice that of the U.S. and got used to double-digit unemployment as a routine and semi-permanent feature of life.

Germany, the economic powerhouse of Europe in the Sixties and Seventies, is now a country whose annual growth rate has averaged 1.1 percent since the mid-Nineties; where every indicator—homeownership, new car registrations—is heading down; and in which government agencies have to budget for such novel expenditures as narrowing the sewer lines in economically moribund, fast-depopulating municipalities because the existing pipes are too wide to, ah, expedite the reduced flow. Even flushing yourself down the toilet of history is trickier than it looks.

Of course, if you're one of the seemingly endless supply of Americans willing to turn up at the president's ersatz "town meetings" to petition the seigneur to take care of your medical bills and your mortgage and the gas in your tank, the Euro-deal looks pretty sweet. When they deign to work, even the French can match the Americans in hourly productivity. Unfortunately for boring things like GDP, the Euro-week has far fewer hours. There are government-mandated maximum 35-hour workweeks, six weeks of paid vacation, more public holidays, and, in the event that, after all that, some unfortunate clerical error still shows the calendar with an occasional five-day week, you can always strike. The upshot is that, while a working American puts in an average 1,800 hours a year, a working German puts in 1,350 hours a year—or 25 percent less.

It's tempting to assume these are deeply ingrained cultural differences. "It's the good life, full of fun, seems to be the ideal," as the Gallic crooner Sacha Distel smoothly observed. But, in fact, until the Seventies Americans and Europeans put in more or less identical work hours. What happened is that the Protobamas of the Continental political class legislated sloth, and, as is the way, the citizenry got used to it.

Indeed, the proposed European Constitution enshrines leisure as a fundamental right. Article II-91: "Every worker has the right to limitation of maximum working hours, to daily and weekly rest periods and to an annual period of paid leave." There's no First Amendment or Second Amendment, but who needs free speech or guns when life is one gentle swing in the government hammock?

WHEN American commentators notice these numbers, it's usually to crank out a "Why oh why can't we be as enlightened?" op-ed. A couple of years back Paul Krugman wrote a column asserting that, while parochial American conservatives drone on about "family values," the Europeans live it, enacting policies that are more family-friendly. On the Continent, claims the professor, "government regulations actually allow people to make a desirable tradeoff—to modestly lower income in return for more time with friends and family."

As befits a distinguished economist, Krugman failed to notice that, for a continent of "family friendly" policies, Europe is remarkably short of families. While America's fertility rate is more or less at replacement level—2.1—seventeen European nations are at what demographers call "lowest low" fertility—1.3 or less, a rate from which no society in human history has ever recovered. Germans, Spaniards, Italians, and Greeks have upside-down family trees: Four grandparents have two children and one grandchild. The numbers are grim, and getting grimmer. The EU began the century with four workers for every retiree. By 2050, Germany will have 1.1 workers for every retiree. At Oktoberfest a decade or three hence, that fetching young lad in the lederhosen serving you your foaming stein will be singlehandedly propping up entire old folks' homes. Except he won't. He'll have scrammed and headed off to Australia in search of a livelier youth scene, or at any rate a livelier late-middle-aged scene. And the guy taking his place in the beer garden won't be wearing lederhosen because he'll be Muslim and they don't like to expose their knees. And, come to think of it, he's unlikely to be serving beer, either. The EU would need at least another 50 million immigrants—working immigrants, that is (they're not always, especially with Euro-welfare)—to keep wrinkly old Gerhard and Jean-Claude in the social programs to which they've become accustomed.

To run the numbers is to render them absurd: It's not about economic performance, public-pensions liabilities, entitlement reform. Something more profound is at work. Europe has entered a long dark Oktoberfest of the soul, drinking to oblivion in the autumn of the year, as *les feuilles mortes* pile up all around.

Let's take the second part of Paul Krugman's assertion: These "family friendly" policies certainly give you "more time." For what? High-school soccer and 4-H at the county fair? No. As we've seen, kids not called Muhammad are thin on the ground. God? No. When you worship the state-as-church, you don't need to bother showing up to Mass anymore.

Civic volunteerism? No. All but extinct on the Continent. So what do Europeans do with all that time? Do they paint, write, make movies? Not so's you'd notice. Not compared with 40 years ago. Never mind Bach or even Offenbach, these days the French can't produce a Sacha Distel or the Germans a Bert Kaempfert, the boffo Teuton bandleader who somewhat improbably managed to play a critical role in the careers of the three biggest Anglophone pop acts of the 20th century—he wrote "Strangers in the Night" for Sinatra, "Wooden Heart" for Elvis, and produced the Beatles' first recording session. If that sounds like a Trivial Pursuit answer, it's not. Eutopia turned out to be the trivial pursuit; to produce a Bert Kaempfert figure right now would be a major cultural accomplishment Europe can't quite muster the energy for. "Give people plenty and security, and they will fall into spiritual torpor," wrote Charles Murray in *In Our Hands*. "When life becomes an extended picnic, with nothing of importance to do, ideas of greatness become an irritant. Such is the nature of the Europe syndrome."

The key word here is "give." When the state "gives" you plenty—when it takes care of your health, takes cares of your kids, takes care of your elderly parents, takes care of every primary responsibility of adulthood—it's not surprising that the citizenry cease to function as adults: Life becomes a kind of extended adolescence—literally so for those Germans who've mastered the knack of staying in education till they're 34 and taking early retirement at 42 (which sounds a lot like where Obama's college-for-all plans will lead).

Genteel decline can be very agreeable—initially: You still have terrific restaurants, beautiful buildings, a great opera house. And once the pressure's off it's nice to linger at the sidewalk table, have a second café au lait and a pain au chocolat, and watch the world go by. At the Munich Security Conference in February, President Sarkozy demanded of his fellow Continentals: "Does Europe want peace, or do we want to be left in peace?" To pose the question is to answer it. Alas, it works only for a generation or two, and then, as the gay-bar owners are discovering in a fast-Islamifying Amsterdam, reality reasserts itself.

In 2003, the IMF conducted a study of Eurosclerosis and examined the impact on chronic unemployment and other woes if the Eurozone labor market were to Americanize—that's to say, increase participation in the work force, reduce taxes and job-for-life security, etc. The changes would be tough, but over the long term beneficial. But it's too late for that: What's "changed" is the disposition of the people: *If it's unsustainable, who cares? As long as they can sustain it till I'm dead.* That's the second and most critical objection to Europeanization: It corrodes self-reliance very quickly, to the point where even basic survival instincts can be bred out of society in a generation or two. In *America Alone* I cited a headline that seemed almost too perfect a summation of a Continent where entitlement addiction trumps demographic reality: "Frenchman Lived with Dead Mother to Keep Pension." She was 94 when she croaked, so she'd presumably been getting the government check for a good three decades, but hey, it's 700 euros a month. He kept her corpse under a pile of newspapers in the living room for five years and put on a woman's voice whenever the benefits office called. Since my book came out, readers have sent me similar stories on a regular basis: "An Austrian woman lived with the mummified remains of her aunt for a year, Vienna police said Wednesday." In Europe, nothing is certain except death and welfare, and why let the former get in the way of the latter?

IT'S interesting that it never occurred to the IMF that anyone would be loopy enough to try their study the other way around—to examine the impact on America of Europeanization. For that, we had to wait for the election of Barack Obama. Which brings us to the third problem of Europeanization: What are the consequences for the world if the hyperpower embarks on the same form of assisted suicide as the rest of the West? In quite the wackiest essay *Foreign Policy* has ever published, Parag Khanna of the Brookings Institution argued that the European Union was now "the world's first metrosexual superpower." And he meant it as a compliment. Mr. Khanna's thesis is that, unlike the insecure American cowboy, Europe is secure enough in its hard power to know when to deploy a little sweet-smelling soft power. Seriously:

> The EU has become more effective—and more attractive—than the United States on the catwalk of diplomatic clout. . . . Metrosexuals always know how to dress for the occasion (or mission) . . . but it's best done by donning Armani pinstripes rather than U.S. Army fatigues. . . . Even Turkey is freshening up with *eau d'Europe*. . . . Stripping off stale national sovereignty (that's *so* last century), Europeans now parade their "pooled power," the new look for this geopolitical season. . . . Brand Europe is taking over. . . . Europe's flashy new symbol of power, the Airbus 380, will soon strut on runways all over Asia.
>
> But don't be deceived by the metrosexual superpower's pleatless pants—Europe hasn't lost touch with its hard assets. . . . Europe's 60,000-troop Rapid Reaction Force will soon be ready to deploy around the world. . . . Just as metrosexuals are redefining masculinity, Europe is redefining old notions of power and influence. Expect *Bend It Like Brussels* to play soon in capital cities worldwide.

And on and on, like one of those pieces an editor runs when he wants to get fired and go to Tuscany to write a novel. The Airbus 380 is a classic stillborn Eurostatist money pit, the Rapid Reaction Force can't deploy anywhere beyond a Europe Day parade down the Champs-Élysées, and given that the governing Socialist caucus on the Brussels city council already has a Muslim majority I doubt they'll be bending it themselves that much longer.

This is the logical reductio of the Robert Kagan thesis that Americans are from Mars, Europeans are from Venus. It's truer to say that Europeans are from Pluto, which was recently downgraded to "dwarf planet" status. In foreign affairs, a dwarf superpower doesn't have policies, it has attitudes—in part because that's all it can afford. An America that attempts Euro-scale social programs would have to reel in its military expenditures. After all, Europe could introduce socialized health care and all the rest only because the despised cowboy across the ocean was picking up the tab for the continent's defense. So for America to follow the EU down the same social path would have huge strategic implications for everyone else, not least Europe. We would be joining the Continentals in prancing around in Armani pinstripes and *eau d'Europe* as the bottom dropped out of our hard assets. And Putin, Kim Jong Il, the mullahs, et al. might not find the perfume as heady as Mr. Khanna does.

Even in their heyday—the Sixties and Seventies—the good times in Europe were underwritten by the American security guarantee: The only reason France could get away with being France, Belgium with being Belgium, Sweden with being Sweden is that America was America. Kagan's thesis—Americans are from Mars, Europeans are from Venus—will look like paradise lost when the last conventional "great power" of Western civilization embraces the death-cult narcissism of its transatlantic confreres in the full knowledge of where that leads. Why would you do anything so crazy? Ah, but these are crazy times: Europeans are from Pluto, Americans are from Goofy. **NR**

EMPLOYEE
No Choice Act

The Democrats, the unions, and the workers they manipulate

BY PETER KIRSANOW

THERE'S a good likelihood that sometime in the next few months we'll see the most profound change in labor and employment law in more than 70 years: the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA).

For union leaders and their political supporters, EFCA promises to dramatically swell the ranks of organized employees—by hundreds of thousands, if not millions—within just the first few years. The added billions in union dues would resuscitate labor's clout and create a mammoth ATM for union-friendly politicians and interest groups.

Business leaders, on the other hand, see EFCA as clearing a path toward greater unionization of their workforces. They fear being stripped of the ability to manage the direction of their enterprises.

EFCA would change the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) in several fundamental respects, but two are most important. One is EFCA's card-check provision, which would eliminate employers' right to insist that employees vote in secret-ballot elections when deciding whether to be represented by a union (rather than publicly signing cards, a process that makes it easy for union bosses to pressure workers). The other is the mandatory-arbitration provision, which requires that when an employer and a new union can't agree on a contract within a set period of time, a government-appointed arbitrator steps in to make a binding decision—dictating employment terms to companies and their employees alike. Both changes should be opposed.

For decades, employees have generally become unionized in one of two ways. One is a secret-ballot election supervised by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The other is voluntary employer recognition.

Union agents often begin organizing employees several months before an election. They must secure signed authorization cards from at least 30 percent of employees for the NLRB to conduct an election. (In practice, unions often get 85 to 90 percent, as a cushion against the inevitable erosion of union support during the six weeks between the filing of an election petition and the election.) If more than 50 percent of the voting employees cast ballots in favor of the union, the NLRB will certify the union as the employees' collective-bargaining representative.

Under EFCA, however, a union need only obtain signed authorization cards from more than 50 percent of the employees in the bargaining unit to be certified by the NLRB. The employer could no longer require an election, though the employees themselves could demand one. For all practical purposes, elections would cease.

EFCA supporters maintain that card check is imperative because employer abuses make secret-ballot elections unreliable barometers of union sentiment. Unions claim that employers routinely fire or suspend union supporters, threaten to close facilities, and employ procedural tactics to delay and/or win union elections. These abuses, they contend, are the reason for the steep decline in the percentage of organized private-sector employees—from 35 percent in 1954 to 23.6 percent in 1980 to just 7.6 percent today.

This argument is specious. Certainly there are rogue employers, but far fewer than when unions were at their peak. Indeed, the most recent NLRB data show that when unions bring unlawful-discharge cases before the Board, they prevail only 3 percent of the time—and that employers used procedural challenges to contest the results of only 1.1 percent of elections won by unions in fiscal year 2007. Furthermore, elections are being conducted more rapidly now than ever before, indicating that even if employers are trying to delay elections, they're not having much success. Since 1980, the median number of days between the time a union petitions for an election and the election itself has fallen from 50 to 39. Unions won 54.3 percent of all elections in fiscal 2007, about the same as in 1974.

OTHER factors are far more responsible for the decline in unionization. One is that, over the last 30 years, many unions simply have not been organizing workers as aggressively as in the past. There were nearly five times more union elections in 1980 than in 2007. The AFL-CIO's lack of emphasis on organizing prompted the 2005 departure from that organization of a number of major unions, including the Service Employees International Union, the United Food and Commercial Workers, and the Teamsters. Many unions that have publicly declared an emphasis on organizing continue to be successful. The SEIU, for example, won approximately 80 percent of the elections in which it participated in 2007 while also mounting aggressive card-check campaigns.

Global competition, deregulation, and the decline of U.S. industries that have traditionally been union strongholds are also factors. But perhaps the most important is the proliferation of various employment laws over the last 30 years that have made much of what unions do redundant if not superfluous. The agencies that enforce the Occupational Safety and Health Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Family Medical Leave Act, the Equal Pay Act, etc. have intruded into areas that were once the sole province of unions. Why should an employee pay $500 a year in union dues for something that the government already does?

EFCA supporters know this. Until recently, many of them didn't seem to have a problem with secret-ballot elections. For example, in 2001 Rep. George Miller (D., Calif.), who introduced EFCA in the House in 2007, wrote a letter to Mexican officials following a labor dispute in that country, stating: "We feel that the private ballot is absolutely necessary in order to ensure that workers are not intimidated into voting for a union they may otherwise not choose."

Mr. Kirsanow, a former member of the NLRB, is an attorney in Cleveland, Ohio.

Joining Miller as signatories were Barney Frank (D., Mass.), Dennis Kucinich (D., Ohio), Bernie Sanders (I., Vt.), Zoe Lofgren (D., Calif.), and Barbara Lee (D., Calif.). Each supports EFCA. Similarly, in briefs filed before courts and the NLRB, unions that now support EFCA have consistently extolled the superiority and necessity of the secret ballot. EFCA itself conveniently preserves secret-ballot elections for those occasions on which employees seek to *de*certify (i.e., get rid of) a union.

If it's clear that much of EFCA's support doesn't come from principle, one must ask if it comes from opportunism. It's a very plausible explanation: Card check makes unionization so easy that any union organizer who cannot organize a workplace after EFCA should be drummed out of the labor movement for malpractice. This is because unions have mastered the art of using aggressive tactics to get union cards signed without the knowledge of employers.

A union typically begins organizing a workplace up to a year before filing an election petition with the NLRB, and in most cases manages to keep the employer oblivious. The organizers swamp employees with arguments extolling the merits of unionization. Union representatives court employees in homes, bars, and bowling alleys, promising better wages, benefits, and working conditions. Employees are often asked to sign cards in the presence of co-workers and union agents. Cards are sometimes even filled out by a union agent with the employee's consent. The opportunities for pressure and coercion are manifold. And the odds of getting more than 50 percent of employees to sign cards are very high.

ALTHOUGH EFCA's card-check provision has captured the most public attention, its mandatory-arbitration provision may be worse in the long run.

Under current law, once a union is certified, the employer and union are required to bargain in good faith to reach an agreement. The government plays no role. There are no time limits, and neither party may be compelled to agree to a given contract proposal. The NLRB becomes involved only when one party alleges that the other has committed an unfair labor practice, and even then the remedy for refusing to bargain is an NLRB order directing the offending party to negotiate. The NLRB does not have the authority to impose a substantive contract provision of its own design, or to compel a party to agree to the other side's proposal.

But under EFCA, an employer would have to meet with a newly certified union within ten days of the union's request for bargaining, and if no agreement were reached within 90 days, either party could request mediation by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. If mediation went on for 30 days without producing an agreement, an arbitrator or arbitration panel would dictate a contract detailing hours, wages, and terms and conditions of employment. Neither party could reject the mandate, which would be binding for two years.

EFCA supporters contend that the mandatory-arbitration provision is necessary because employers frequently delay or drag out negotiations, sometimes for more than a year. By one questionable study they frequently cite, nearly half of new unions never get a first contract. This, they say, erodes support for the union among bargaining-unit members, sometimes resulting in the union's decertification.

This argument ignores the fact that such employer conduct is already unlawful. But more important, it acknowledges neither the difficulties inherent in negotiating a first contract nor the dangers in abandoning the freedom-of-contract principles upon which our economic system is based.

Most experienced labor lawyers will tell you that during the first 120 days of negotiating an initial contract, the parties are still debating the shape of the bargaining table. Parties with no prior bargaining history must resolve a host of difficult issues such as wage rates, medical and retirement benefits, hours of work, subcontracting rights, and work assignments. Even for a relatively small work force, the result of this debate can run longer than 100 pages. Unrealistic employee expectations (raised by over-the-top union promises) can make the situation worse.

Add the prospect of mandatory arbitration, which will reduce the union's incentive to make concessions, and it becomes very likely that most first-contract negotiations will end up in arbitration. This has employers apoplectic. What if the arbitrator decides that an employer must increase wages beyond what competitors pay? What if the arbitrator requires the company to go into a multi-employer pension plan with massive potential withdrawal liability? Tough. It's stuck for two years. And once things like this happen, they're part of the baseline for future contracts.

Even if arbitrators perform their duties diligently and soberly, they can never make business decisions as well as business owners can. As former NLRB chairman Peter Hurtgen stated in his 2007 testimony on EFCA before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee:

> No outside agency, whether arbitration, courts, or government entity, has the skill, knowledge, or expertise to create a collective-bargaining agreement. If it is not a creature of the parties' creation, it likely will fail of its purpose. The negotiation of a collective-bargaining agreement is the search for mutually resolving each side's interests. It must be done with trade-offs and separate prioritizing. Only the parties can do that. There are no standards for arbitrators to apply. There is no skill set for arbitrators to use. Solomon is simply unavailable.

THIS year's EFCA debate will be the biggest battle between business and labor in decades. The labor movement has been building toward this point for years: In March 2007, EFCA passed the House by a margin of 241–185, but secured only 51 votes of the 60 needed to invoke cloture in the Senate. EFCA proponents sensed an opportunity, and reportedly pumped hundreds of millions of dollars into the 2008 elections. Obama, who'd been a 2007 EFCA co-sponsor in the Senate, promised to sign the bill if it came across his desk in the White House.

Today EFCA proponents have an expanded Democratic majority in the House, 58 or 59 Democrats in the Senate, and no veto threat. Unions, realizing that the planets may not align for them again, vow to spend tens of millions more to get EFCA passed by summer.

If every Democrat votes for EFCA, just one or two cooperating Republicans in the Senate would guarantee its passage.

But EFCA opponents are hopeful they can convince three or four Democratic senators from right-to-work states either to vote against the bill or to support amendments to blunt its impact. Polls show that even a majority of union members oppose elimination of secret ballots, so amendment, if not outright defeat, of EFCA is possible.

The two most probable amendments would substitute a "quickie" election—one conducted within, say, five days of the filing of an election petition—for card check and lengthen the 120-day bargaining period preceding mandatory arbitration. Neither of these amendments, however, would even remotely address employer concerns. "Quickie" elections, while preserving the secret ballot, would still tip the organizational scales heavily in favor of unions; when unions managed to keep their organizational efforts secret, employers would have only a few days in which to present their arguments. And a longer bargaining period may do little more than prolong the inevitable resort to arbitration.

Should EFCA pass in some form, court challenges await. Richard Epstein of the University of Chicago Law School has argued that awards under the mandatory-arbitration provision may violate the takings clause of the Fifth Amendment ("nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation"). Certain New Deal–era Supreme Court decisions also suggest the mandatory-arbitration provision constitutes an unlawful delegation of legislative authority under Article 1, Section 1 (which gives all legislative authority to Congress, not to chosen arbitrators).

At the same time that business groups are furiously fighting EFCA's enactment, individual employers across the country are making preparations in case the bill becomes law. Some employers have been training their work forces and implementing sophisticated, EFCA-specific union-avoidance measures for over a year. Employers in the health-care, hospitality, and retail sectors of the economy have concluded they are particularly vulnerable and are preparing accordingly. But the sheer scale of EFCA's potential impact has rendered some employers catatonic.

IN the end, EFCA's impact will be felt most acutely by employees. The workplace regime that EFCA will create could have been concocted by Lewis Carroll. Since unions have an incentive to keep their efforts quiet, and since unions can declare victory once they hit 50 percent, an employee working second shift (when most other workers take first shift) might not even be aware that a union is organizing until the NLRB certifies it as his representative. Also, economically, unionization works much as minimum wage does—it drives up the cost of labor, forcing employers to lay off current workers and hire fewer new ones—and mandatory arbitration will sharply exaggerate this effect. If our employee's new union and the company are not able to reach an agreement within 120 days, an arbitrator could write a "contract" requiring the company to deduct $45 a month in union dues from the employee's paycheck and pay a 4 percent wage increase that it can't afford. If the employee is at the bottom of the seniority list, he's gone, and there's nothing he or the employer can do about it.

Under EFCA, "choice" won't be free. **NR**

ROCKY RIDE

The Republicans' fall from power in Colorado—and how the Democrats hope to replicate it

BY ROB WITWER

THE day before Barack Obama accepted the Democratic nomination at Invesco Field in Denver, a group of progressive activists gathered nearby to discuss what Democrats call the "Colorado miracle." The story is by now well known. Through a network of wealthy donors called the Colorado Democracy Alliance, Democrats turned Colorado—until recently, a reliably Republican state—a deep shade of blue.

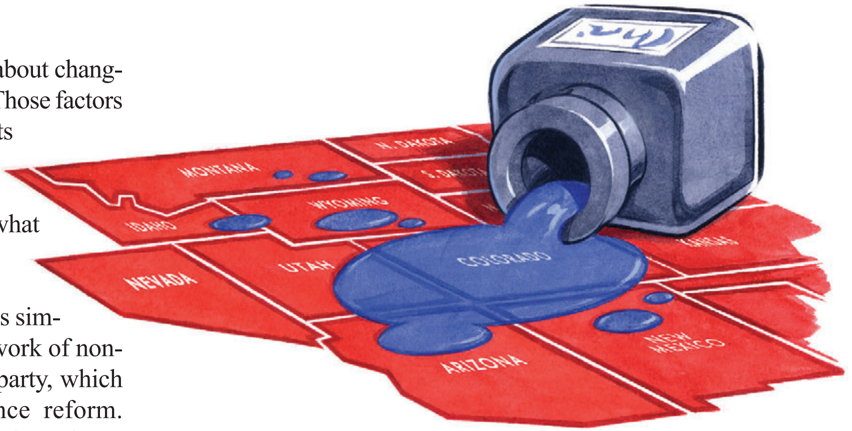
Soon the conversation turned to something less well known: a quiet little project called the Committee on States, through which Democrats plan to export their Colorado success across the country over the next 20 months. "As we know, 2010 is redistricting, there are 35 governors' races, so it's going to be a critically important year," said Rob Stein, founder of the Democracy Alliance, a national Democratic fundraising group. To prepare for 2010, Stein said last summer, architects of the "Colorado miracle" and a lawyer named Frank Smith would be working hard to get progressives in 18 other states "up to Colorado's level of sophistication and organizational development."

It wasn't empty talk. In the past 30 months, the Democracy Alliance's donors have put over $110 million into 30 state-level groups. "There are a bunch of states," Stein continued, "where over the next couple of years a lot of development is going to happen." Later in the presentation, Smith named a few: Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Utah, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

For Republicans in these states, understanding what happened in Colorado isn't just a matter of curiosity—it's a matter of political survival.

Consider the following. In October 2004, the GOP dominated politics at every level in Colorado. Republicans held both U.S. Senate seats, five of seven congressional seats, the governor's mansion, the secretary of state's and treasurer's offices, and both houses of the state legislature. Four years later, the opposite is true: Replace the word "Republicans" with "Democrats" in the previous sentence, and you have one of the most stunning reversals of fortune in American political history.

Mr. Witwer is a former member of the Colorado house of representatives. This article is excerpted from the book The Blueprint: How Democrats Won the West (and Why Republicans Should Care), *by Rob Witwer and Adam Schrager, to be published by Fulcrum in 2010.*



DARREN GYGI

How did it happen? The Colorado story isn't just about changing demographics or an unpopular Bush presidency. Those factors played a part, but they cannot explain why Democrats dominate a state in which Republicans still outnumber them by 9,000 registered voters. Democratic success in Colorado is in large part the result of what Stein calls a "more strategic, more focused, more disciplined, better financed" progressive movement.

In hindsight, what Colorado Democrats did was as simple as it was effective. First, they built a robust network of nonprofit entities to replace the Colorado Democratic party, which had been rendered obsolete by campaign-finance reform. Second, they raised historic amounts of money from large donors to fund these entities. Third, they developed a consistent, topical message. Fourth, and most important, they put aside their policy differences to focus on the common goal of winning elections. As former Democratic house majority leader Alice Madden later said, "It's not rocket science."

In a larger sense, this is also a story about the unintended consequences of campaign-finance reform. In 2002, Congress passed McCain-Feingold. That same year, Colorado citizens enacted Amendment 27, a constitutional amendment that capped state-legislative contributions at $400 per donor. By lowering the amounts candidates could raise and spend, these laws effectively took message control out of the hands of candidates and handed it to outsiders.

Campaign spending in large quantities can now be accomplished only through the "independent sector"—a collection of nonprofit organizations that has stepped into the role once occupied by political parties.

Speaking to a group of lawyers in Denver last year, Democratic attorney Mark Grueskin summed up the new reality of political giving: "With the increased imposition of contribution limits, political money finds a way to the political system—always does, always has. . . . And those of you in this room are simply among the blessed, because you get to help people give politically. They're going to give. And now they do it through nonprofit entities."

The cost of participation in elections through the independent sector is high, especially at the state level. Political nonprofits are subject to byzantine tax, corporate, and accounting rules, and require constant guidance from lawyers and accountants. That guidance is expensive, which is why there's no such thing as a "mom and pop" 527. Small and medium donors need not apply.

Colorado Democrats knew they needed a large infusion of seed capital to get their fledgling independent sector off the ground. At the same time, and quite serendipitously, a new breed of business-savvy multimillionaires (and one billionaire) emerged—and they were willing to write big checks. Unlike the traditional moneyed-liberal elites who try to change the world through charities, foundations, and think tanks, these donors just wanted results on Election Day. For Democrats, that wasn't a problem; they wanted the same thing.

By leveraging big dollars against traditionally sleepy local races, Colorado Democrats raised the ante to a level once seen only in federal campaigns. The influx of congressional-level cash has turned state-legislative races inside out. What used to be a local affair of meet-and-greet coffees and door-to-door campaigning now consists of paid staff, television and radio ads, glossy mailers, and platoons of hired door walkers.

The shift of political discourse away from candidates and towards outside groups has created a tangible change in Colorado's political culture. Campaigns tend to be more negative than before, since the entities bearing the message won't be on the ballot and can't be held accountable by voters. The issues driving campaigns are statewide, as opposed to local. And state legislators no longer think merely about keeping their constituents happy; nowadays they keep a wary eye on the 527s in Denver, too.

Democratic success in Colorado can be traced to a few donors, advisers, and elected officials who in 2004 shared the belief that by uniting in purpose, they could overcome the 177,000-voter registration edge Republicans then enjoyed.

At the time, the GOP hold on the senate was a tenuous 18–17. Nobody denied Democrats had a shot there. The real test would be in the state house, where Republicans held a solid 37–28 majority.

One of the first donors at the table was Tim Gill, the openly gay founder of software giant Quark, Inc. His interest in politics began in 1992, when 53.4 percent of Colorado's voters approved Amendment 2, a ballot measure excluding gays and lesbians from being protected by state anti-discrimination laws. "Nothing can compare to the psychological trauma of realizing that more than half the people in your state believe that you don't deserve equal rights," he said in a 2000 interview with the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*.

Gill was upset—and he had the financial means to do something about it (*Forbes* recently estimated his net worth at more than $425 million). In the mid-1990s, he endowed two foundations to increase awareness of gay-rights issues. Organized under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, they were (and are) prohibited by law from participating in partisan political activities.

Although he was heavily involved in philanthropic work, Gill's political contributions were relatively modest. Then something happened in the Colorado state house that would add a partisan component to Gill's activism—as well as a zero to his level of financial commitment. It also set into motion a chain of events that would change the course of Colorado political history.

In the spring of 2004, a state representative from the northern suburbs of Denver named Shawn Mitchell sponsored House Bill 1375. As introduced, the bill would have prohibited public schools from teaching about homosexuality "except in the context of instruction concerning the risk and prevention of sexually transmitted disease." By the time the bill was signed into law, it had been watered down considerably. Nevertheless, Gill was infuriated. Telling a Democratic leader that "somebody's got to go," he jumped into the political game with both feet.

Seeking political counsel, Gill enlisted Ted Trimpa, an openly gay lawyer with widely respected political skills. Trimpa brought an innate pragmatism that reflected his western-Kansas roots. He also understood Republicans: With a résumé including a stint on the staff of former U.S. senator Nancy Kassebaum (R., Kans.), Trimpa had a good read on the art of the possible in Colorado's conservative-leaning political environment.

Called "Colorado's answer to Karl Rove" by *The Atlantic* magazine, Trimpa believes that to win, you must project strength. "You have to create an environment of fear and respect," he told the *Bay Area Reporter*. "The only way to do that is to get aggressive and go out and actually beat them up [politically]. Sitting there crying and whining about being victims isn't going to get us equality. What is going to get us equality is fighting for it."

Gill connected with Al Yates, the recently retired president of Colorado State University and a prominent member of the black community. Yates was a trusted adviser to Pat Stryker, a billionaire heiress from Fort Collins whose grandfather started a medical-products company called the Stryker Corporation. Like Gill, Stryker had been a supporter of progressive causes.

Yates and Stryker took Stryker's private jet to meet with Gill at his Aspen home, where they discussed transforming Colorado politics. Gill and Stryker then reached out to Jared Polis, a 29-year-old who had sold his family's online greeting-card company for $780 million in 1999, and Rutt Bridges, a former geophysicist who had made more than $30 million selling software to oil and gas companies. Together with Gill and Stryker, they formed the "Gang of Four"—and became the first example of what progressives now call a structured donor alliance.

Trimpa reached out to traditional pro-Democratic groups such as the Colorado Education Association, the Colorado Trial Lawyers Association, the AFL-CIO, the Colorado chapter of NARAL, and the Colorado Conservation Voters. Although these organizations (especially the unions) were capable of bringing significant resources to bear on legislative races, they had never coordinated their efforts in a meaningful way.

Working with Trimpa and house majority leader Alice Madden, they met regularly at a roundtable where they identified vulnerable Republican legislative seats—and then designed strategies to pick them off. The group understood they could accomplish more if they agreed on a common goal: winning elections. Discussion of policy, or anything else that could divide the coalition or distract from its objective, was strictly verboten.

They also understood that campaign-finance reform had for all practical purposes killed political parties, leaving a vacuum that could be filled only by nonprofit entities. While national political groups understood this, in 2004 it was unusual for state-based organizations to grasp its significance. The group capitalized on a key provision of post-campaign-finance-reform election law: While nonprofits were no longer allowed to coordinate their activities with candidates or political parties, they were perfectly free to coordinate amongst themselves.

And coordinate they did.

In August 2004, targeted Republican candidates began to feel the first breezes of what soon became a hurricane. Large, coordinated donations showed up in their opponents' coffers, and word began to trickle out about massive door-to-door walking campaigns.

And then the mail hit. "Who do I see about my prescription drug costs?!" shouts an angry woman wielding a rolling pin. The object of her anger was Rep. Bob Briggs, accused of voting against lowering the costs of 20 well-known brands of prescription medications. Pieces hit voters' mailboxes not just once or twice, but almost every single day for several weeks before the election. The relentless wave of mail focused like a laser on poll-tested issues that mattered to unaffiliated voters: health care, education, and the environment.

In 2002, it was unusual for more than $100,000 to be spent even on a targeted legislative race. In 2004, that number more than doubled, with the vast majority of the difference being spent on the Democratic side of the ledger. The Republican house 527 raised about $496,000. The Gang of Four's house 527 raised almost $1.07 million—with over half coming just from Gill and Stryker.

Republicans were caught completely off guard. On Election Day, the GOP lost both houses of the state legislature for the first time in 44 years. The Gang of Four targeted eight of the house races, and won seven. (Of those victories, six were in districts won by President Bush.) Democrats now controlled the house 35–30 and the senate 18–17.

After 2004, the Gang of Four morphed into the Colorado Democracy Alliance (CoDA). While Polis dialed back his involvement to focus on his congressional ambitions (he was elected from Boulder in 2008), CoDA more than replaced him with several other financial backers, including retired oil-and-gas executive Tom Congdon, vacuum-cleaner heir Bruce Oreck, progressive activist Linda Shoemaker, and several others. Internal documents revealed that in 2006, the group had a $16.5 million budget. That year, CoDA increased Democratic majorities in the state house (adding four seats) and senate (adding two), and played a key role in electing Democrat Bill Ritter Jr. as governor.

With a new Democratic trifecta in place, progressive donors and organizations cheered the passage of long-sought policy victories. New bills added sexual orientation to the state's anti-discrimination laws and expanded adoption rights for gay parents. Environmental activists rewrote Colorado's oil and gas regulations. Labor received an executive order from Governor Ritter effectively unionizing state employees. And trial lawyers won legislation making it easier to sue homebuilders for construction defects.

COLORADO Republicans have had plenty of time to reflect on the stunning events of the last four years. They still haven't found any major donors to offset the likes of Tim Gill and Pat Stryker. But money is only part of the story: In many ways, Colorado Republicans lost their majority as much as Democrats won it.

"The Democrats did several things really well," says Colorado GOP chairman Dick Wadhams. "They recruited pretty good candidates. They honed in on some of the excesses of the Republican majorities, [on] issues that didn't appear to be what people cared about." Alice Madden agrees: "[We won] because we were talking about what people cared about. . . . It really comes back to the message."

Legislators remember one incident in particular. In 2005, when the state was in the throes of a budget crisis, several Republican state representatives announced plans to pursue a state constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. At a press conference, Rep. Jim Welker asked, "Where do you draw the line? A year ago in India, a woman married her dog." House Speaker Andrew Romanoff fired back: "We're talking about the budget and they're talking about bestiality."

Republicans didn't just lack a compelling message; they lacked unity. While Democratic donors and organizations set aside their differences and gathered around a table, Republicans were busy tearing one another apart in acrimonious primaries. Wadhams recalls: "Starting in the early 1990s, a civil war started within our party between moderates and conservatives that over time resulted in Democrats' winning state legislative seats that historically had been Republican." In 2004, Democrats picked off two Republican house seats where bitter primaries spilled over into the general election. In another race, a Republican group sent a mail piece ten days before the election attacking the Republican incumbent for her moderate positions on education reform. She lost to a liberal Democrat by 48 votes. Had those three seats—all of which George W. Bush carried that year—stayed Republican, the GOP would have held on to a one-seat majority in the house.

Two years later, the campaign of Republican gubernatorial candidate Marc Holtzman labeled his primary opponent, U.S. Rep. Bob Beauprez, "Both Ways Bob." Beauprez went on to win the nomination, but Democratic 527s gleefully highlighted the nickname in a seemingly endless series of 30-second television spots. The image helped sink Beauprez's campaign. "Primaries can stir interest in a party and make candidates and campaigns sharper and more effective," says Wadhams. "But the scorched-earth primaries of the 1990s and early 2000s were deadly to our party."

Republicans have nonetheless found some reasons for optimism. Being in the minority has minimized differences and united conservatives and moderates against a common foe. And where Republicans once saw the Democratic surge in Colorado as a fluke, they now recognize it for the game-changer it was—something to be emulated, not feared. Sweeping Democratic victories have also created opportunities for a new generation of Republican leaders. Led by 33-year-old state senate minority leader Josh Penry, some GOP legislators have become more nimble and message-driven than their predecessors who served in the majority. Taking a cue from British Conservative leader David Cameron, Penry has positioned himself as the head of Colorado's shadow government, sparring with Democratic governor Bill Ritter on key issues like education, transportation, energy, and taxes.

To Penry, who has served only in the minority, the path ahead is clear: "Either we can sit around and whine about the fact that a couple of hyper-rich, super-smart people have been throwing us around like the political equivalent of a rag doll, or we can dust ourselves off, raise the level of our game, and get back in the fight." **NR**

Standing Athwart History

Half a Century Later

EDITORS' NOTE: On the first anniversary of the passing of William F. Buckley Jr., we asked a few conservative writers to reflect on his famous publisher's statement from the first issue of NATIONAL REVIEW, dated Nov. 19, 1955. The original statement appears below, followed by their responses.

THERE is, we like to think, solid reason for rejoicing. Prodigious efforts, by many people, are responsible for NATIONAL REVIEW. But since it will be the policy of this magazine to reject the hypodermic approach to world affairs, we may as well start out at once, and admit that the joy is not unconfined.

Let's face it: Unlike Vienna, it seems altogether possible that did NATIONAL REVIEW not exist, no one would have invented it. The launching of a conservative weekly journal of opinion in a country widely assumed to be a bastion of conservatism at first glance looks like a work of supererogation, rather like publishing a royalist weekly within the walls of Buckingham Palace. It is not that, of course; if NATIONAL REVIEW is superfluous, it is so for very different reasons: It stands athwart history, yelling Stop, at a time when no one is inclined to do so, or to have much patience with those who so urge it.

NATIONAL REVIEW is out of place, in the sense that the United Nations and the League of Women Voters and the *New York Times* and Henry Steele Commager are in place. It is out of place because, in its maturity, literate America rejected conservatism in favor of radical social experimentation. Instead of covetously consolidating its premises, the United States seems tormented by its tradition of fixed postulates having to do with the meaning of existence, with the relationship of the state to the individual, of the individual to his neighbor, so clearly enunciated in the enabling documents of our Republic.

"I happen to prefer champagne to ditchwater," said the benign old wrecker of the ordered society, Oliver Wendell Holmes, "but there is no reason to suppose that the cosmos does." We have come around to Mr. Holmes's view, so much so that we feel gentlemanly doubts when asserting the superiority of capitalism to socialism, of republicanism to centralism, of champagne to ditchwater—of anything to anything. (How curious that one of the doubts one is *not* permitted is whether, at the margin, Mr. Holmes was a useful citizen!) The inroads that relativism has made on the American soul are not so easily evident. One must recently have lived on or close to a college campus to have a vivid intimation of what has happened. It is there that we see how a number of energetic social innovators, plugging their grand designs, succeeded over the years in capturing the Liberal intellectual imagination. And since ideas rule the world, the ideologues, having won over the intellectual class, simply walked in and started to run things.

Run just about *everything*. There never was an age of conformity quite like this one, or a camaraderie quite like the Liberals'. Drop a little itching powder in Jimmy Wechsler's bath and before he has scratched himself for the third time, Arthur Schlesinger will have denounced you in a dozen books and speeches, Archibald MacLeish will have written ten heroic cantos about our age of terror, *Harper's* will have published them, and everyone in sight will have been nominated for a Freedom Award. Conservatives in this country—at least those who have not made their peace with the New Deal, and there is serious question whether there are others—are non-licensed nonconformists; and this is dangerous business in a Liberal world, as every editor of this magazine can readily show by pointing to his scars. Radical conservatives in this country have an interesting time of it, for when they are not being suppressed or mutilated by the Liberals, they are being ignored or humiliated by a great many of those of the well-fed Right, whose ignorance and amorality have never been exaggerated for the same reason that one cannot exaggerate infinity.

There are, thank Heaven, the exceptions. There are those of generous impulse and a sincere desire to encourage a responsible dissent from the Liberal orthodoxy. And there are those who recognize that when all is said and done, the market place depends for a license to operate freely on the men who issue licenses—on the politicians. They recognize, therefore, that efficient getting and spending is itself impossible except in an atmosphere that encourages efficient getting and spending. And back of all political institutions there are moral and philosophical concepts, implicit or defined. Our political economy and our high-energy industry run on large, general principles, on ideas—not by day-to-day guess work, expedients and improvisations. Ideas have to go into exchange to become or remain operative; and the medium of such exchange is the printed word. A vigorous and incorruptible journal of conservative opinion is—dare we say it?—as necessary to better living as Chemistry.

We begin publishing, then, with a considerable stock of experience with the irresponsible Right, and a despair of the intransigence of the Liberals, who run this country; and all this in a world dominated by the jubilant single-mindedness of the practicing Communist, with his inside track to History. All this would not appear to augur well for NATIONAL REVIEW. Yet we start with a considerable—and considered—optimism.

After all, we crashed through. More than one hundred and twenty investors made this magazine possible, and over fifty men and women of small means invested less than one thousand dollars apiece in it. Two men and one woman, all three with overwhelming personal and public commitments, worked round the clock to make publication possible. A score of professional writers pledged their devoted attention to its needs, and hundreds of thoughtful men and women gave evidence that the appearance of such a journal as we have in mind would profoundly affect their lives.

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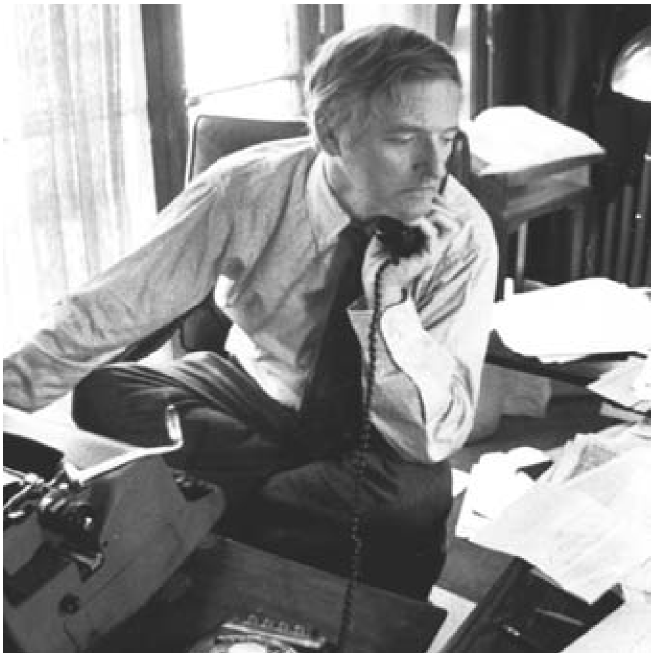
is clearly not enough! It isn't enough. But it is at this point that we steal the march. For we offer, besides ourselves, a position that has not grown old under the weight of a gigantic, parasitic bureaucracy, a position untempered by the doctoral dissertations of a generation of Ph.D.s in social architecture, unattenuated by a thousand vulgar promises to a thousand different pressure groups, uncorroded by a cynical contempt for human freedom. And that, ladies and gentlemen, leaves us just about the hottest thing in town.

—WM. F. BUCKLEY JR.



DAVID FRUM

"STANDING ATHWART HISTORY" is certainly a memorable phrase. But think how much worse a place the world would be if Bill Buckley had actually succeeded in calling a stop to history in 1955. Eastern Europe would still be ruled by Communists. The federal government would still regulate prices on everything from natural gas to brokers' commissions. Racial segregation would remain American practice. People would continue to die unnecessarily of cigarette smoking or in unseatbelted automobile accidents. The country would be poorer, more regulated, less innovative, less educated. All in all, there's been a lot of progress since 1955.

And much of that progress is due to the very movement Bill Buckley created. Conservatives talk about tradition, but despite that talk, over the past half century conservatives have mostly worked to *change* America—and for the better.

No matter how much things improve, however, the predominant conservative outlook remains pessimistic. Buckley's friend Whittaker Chambers famously said that in moving from Communism to conservatism he was leaving the winning for the losing side. Richard Weaver warned that the West had been in more or less uninterrupted decline since the 14th century. James Burnham, Ludwig von Mises, Russell Kirk: Few of the founding fathers of modern conservatism were exactly blithe spirits.

Among Bill Buckley's greatest gifts to conservatism was his temperament. In life, he was a man of infectious cheerfulness. That cheerfulness shines through in his publisher's statement, which begins by outlining all the reasons that NR cannot succeed and ends by promising that it will. Can we who learned so much from Bill Buckley not learn this as well?

True, the news is mostly bad these days. America is governed by leaders determined to veer far and fast to the left, to build a hugely bigger government, and to step back from the struggle against dangerous enemies abroad. Yet for all these problems, our situation is better in almost every way than was the situation of 1955. Let us study history and learn optimism. Stop? No—forward!

Mr. Frum is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

DAVID GELERNTER

THIS FAMOUS STATEMENT is stunningly clear-sighted. In 1987 Allan Bloom published *The Closing of the American Mind*, but 32 years earlier WFB had seen the trap shutting: "There never was an age of conformity quite like this one." He saw the weak-mindedness and sanctimonious smugness of the establishment Left. He would not have been surprised by the intellectual collapse that made the Democrats into the party of reaction, stasis, and passionate special pleading, the party that learns nothing and forgets nothing.

In many ways WFB's statement sounds defensive, but so does "The Star Spangled Banner," and for the same reason: Something precious was (and is) under attack. I can't presume to guess how Bill would write the same sort of manifesto today, but he would surely stick to big principles, to culture and not just politics—and might, perhaps, connect the big principles to the big problems. Conservatives stand for freedom, then and now and always: the freedom of every American to make his own way, free speech on the radio and everywhere else, free elections for workers and other people, a federal voting process that suppresses fraud instead of encouraging it, new schools and new judges unfouled by political bias and the self-hating anti-Americanism that breeds like the Black Death in the gloomy swampland of intellectuals, each citizen's right to understand and evaluate his own tax code and every law passed by his own Congress, rejection of appeasement in every form, freedom to acknowledge and celebrate the nation's rootedness in Christianity, Judaism, and the Bible, and a Lincolnian party platform built on unflinching patriotism, love of liberty, and love of God.

WFB might also, perhaps, have accepted an inevitable shift in terminology. In 1955 he wrote about the "generous impulse" of NR's supporters. Another word for generous is "liberal." For years, conservatives have called themselves the "classical" liberals, the true liberals. Today the Left no longer even wants the word. Today's conservatives are (not the classical nor the true but the *only*) liberals, Democrats are reactionaries, and WFB's ideas are more important than ever.

Mr. Gelernter is a professor of computer science at Yale and a contributing editor of The Weekly Standard.

ROGER KIMBALL

How innocent, not to say halcyon, it seems now—1955, I mean: the "radical social experimentation"; "the inroads that relativism has made on the American soul"; "the intransigence of the Liberals, who run this country." If those yelling Stop in 1955 were "out of place," how much more out of place are they now, in 2009, when "the relationship of the state to the individual" in the United States is poised to undergo its most thoroughgoing transformation in history. Hyperbole? Ponder (for starters) these phrases: "stimulus package," "spread the wealth around," "nationalized health care." Just before the election, the current president of the United States promised he was only a few days away from "fundamentally transforming" the country. If you didn't believe him then, perhaps the last several weeks will have convinced you. Nearly $800 billion appropriated blindly, without debate, discussion, or review because the president told us that "catastrophe" was the only alternative.

Ideas, Bill observed, "rule the world." The United States was "conceived in liberty," as Lincoln put it. Individual freedom was its cynosure, its guiding principle. By 1955, that principle had been insidiously undermined by the well-intentioned dispensations of "literate America," intoxicated as it was by "radical social experimentation." Think of it: "There never was an age of conformity quite like this one." And today? Looking back, we understand that the dampening spirit of conformity and the assault on freedom were then in their infancy. They have suddenly come of age. The question is not whether Bill's inaugural bulletin is still pertinent; it could hardly be more so. The question is whether those "uncorroded by a cynical contempt for human freedom" will command the wit, rhetoric, and moral courage to stand athwart tomorrow whispering, confiding, explaining—sometimes even yelling—Stop, in order that freedom might have an opportunity to prevail.

Mr. Kimball is publisher of Encounter Books and co-editor and co-publisher of The New Criterion.

WILLIAM KRISTOL

"National Review is out of place, in the sense that the United Nations and the League of Women Voters and the *New York Times* and Henry Steele Commager are *in* place. It is out of place because, in its maturity, literate America rejected conservatism in favor of radical social experimentation."

Not so out of place anymore. Thanks in large part to the man who wrote these words, conservatism has over the past half century made a place for itself in American public life, and in passing helped defeat Communism, discredit socialism, and debunk many of the claims of liberalism. After all, who now believes in the U.N. and the League of Women Voters and the *Times* and Henry Steele Commager?

Conformist liberalism has lost its grip. And *pace* some conservative fears about the Obama administration, Americans haven't signed up for an epoch of "radical social experimentation"; to the degree the new administration tries to move in that direction, it will fail.

Still, for all its impressive political and intellectual triumphs, conservatism hasn't triumphed. The danger today is less a bold radicalism or an intransigent liberalism than what Bill Buckley identified in 1955 as "the inroads that relativism has made on the American soul." It is this soft relativism, easygoing and fearful, not a confident and aggressive liberalism, that could do us in. And soft relativism isn't easy to take on; it won't be defeated by mindless or wishful dogmatism.

Under the leadership of Bill and others, we stood athwart history and came up from liberalism. Can we today stand athwart the end of history and come up from relativism?

Mr. Kristol is the founder and editor of The Weekly Standard.

MYRON MAGNET

That Bill Buckley's eloquent manifesto sounds so fresh in 2009 reminds us that no political battle ever stays won. The Obama Left seems set to replay the New Deal that Buckley despised and Reagan partly undid; and chief of staff Rahm Emanuel's quip that no administration should let a good crisis go to waste is fair warning that, like FDR, Obama aims less to end the slump than to wield it as a tool for remaking society. Markets and capitalists have failed, he says—only government can save the day. We're back to the world Bill deplored, filled with doubts about the "superiority of capitalism to socialism."

This time conservatives face two problems in confuting the perennial socialist temptation. First, although Democrats set the economic crisis in motion with the 1977 Community Reinvestment Act, which forced banks to lend to the uncreditworthy, once bankers jettisoned their bankerly prudence and found it profitable to lend wildly to all comers, Republicans failed to rein them in. They failed (through not trying hard enough) to rein in government-sponsored Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, whose securitization of dubious mortgages facilitated the lending frenzy and spread poison throughout the world financial system. The Republican SEC let investment banks self-regulate and loosened their capital requirements, allowing them to speculate in such instruments with mountains of borrowed money, which proved fatal to themselves and toxic to their lenders. So the GOP conspired in what the Democrats began, and we have to admit that. Conservatives need to articulate clearly the familiar conservative idea that freedom depends on rules that we enforce—even in markets.

Second, Alexander Hamilton, the founding father of free-market conservatism, would have spun in his grave when some Republican congressmen, in the name of free-market fundamentalism, voted down the first version of the TARP in September, imperfect as it was. Part of government's role is keeping the banking system sound, Hamilton argued, so that people don't lose faith in it and make it collapse completely. Those Republicans who would have let big chunks of our financial system fail would have found that some destruction is not creative but merely catastrophic.

The U.S. free-market system that conservatives cherish and that the world envied depends on government regulation to keep it transparent and sound. Otherwise you have just a bazaar. If conservatives can't agree on what role—limited but positive—government should play in a free economy and state that vision plainly, then Obama will give us regulation that stifles rather than ensures freedom.

Mr. Magnet is editor-at-large of the Manhattan Institute's City Journal.

CHARLES MURRAY

PUTTING ASIDE THE SADNESS—to reread that magnificent publisher's statement is to feel anew the enormous magnitude of Bill's loss—here is the sentence that I think speaks most directly to the present condition of conservatism: "Radical conservatives in this country have an interesting time of it, for when they are not being suppressed or mutilated by the Liberals, they are being ignored or humiliated by a great many of those of the well-fed Right, whose ignorance and amorality have never been exaggerated for the same reason that one cannot exaggerate infinity." He could have been describing the treatment of conservatives by the Republican party since roughly 1996. And we (I am happy to call myself a conservative if it is Bill Buckley's conservatism) have put up with it, grumbling only mildly and respectfully about "compassionate conservatism," unprecedented federal intrusion into local education, support of mortgage policies that made it possible for clever bankers to get rich by lending money to people who were unlikely to pay it back, and a massive new unfunded Medicare entitlement. On top of that, we have had to watch a Republican Congress prove that, given power, they are every bit as corrupt and cynical as any Democratic Congress.

Now I suppose we will hear: "See how much worse Obama is than McCain would have been?" Let me propose an alternative interpretation of history: An Obama victory is what we get after a decade during which Republicans cut themselves loose from principled, coherent conservatism. It is the well-fed, ignorant, and amoral Republican party that has led us to what looks likely to become a catastrophe for the American project. The sooner conservatives cut themselves loose from fealty to the Republicans, the sooner we can once again offer a position "unattenuated by a thousand vulgar promises to a thousand different pressure groups, uncorroded by a cynical contempt for human freedom." And once again become the hottest thing in town.

Mr. Murray is the W. H. Brady Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

RAMESH PONNURU

TO READ WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.'S STATEMENT in the first edition of NR is to be shocked at how relevant it is to contemporary conservatism. The reverence for the Constitution and Declaration of Independence, the fusion of traditionalist and libertarian impulses, even the delight in tweaking the *New York Times*: All these recognizable features of conservatism today are present in embryo.

One might have expected Buckley's hostility to Soviet Communism to date it, but that menace is very nearly off the essay's stage. Buckley is more concerned with the weakness and confusion of our response to the Soviet threat. Their sources—here identified as the liberal conformity of the academy and the media and the spread of relativism—have outlived that particular threat. The type of relativism Buckley had in mind has, indeed, spread further, so much so that the implicit description of Fifties America as a hotbed of it now sounds quaint.

In at least one respect, however, our historical distance from 1955 clouds our understanding of the essay. The line about "standing athwart history" is often taken to express either pessimism or a resistance to change or both. It is probably better understood as a denial of liberalism's pretension to represent an inevitable future. (Note the capitalization in the reference to the Communist's "inside track to History.")

Few people now think that the future means a planned economy and a collectivist society, but inevitabilism, in the form of a historically fated leftward march toward social democracy and liberal secularism, is still very much with us. It has gotten a big boost from the election. We should stand athwart history, and change the future, again.

Mr. Ponnuru is a senior editor of NATIONAL REVIEW.

WILLIAM RUSHER

THE MOST FASCINATING THING about Bill Buckley's 1955 statement is how wildly it is at odds with the American political scene today.

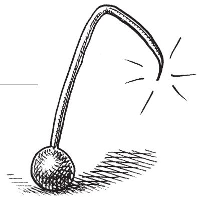
As Buckley rightly pointed out, one of the most striking things about 1955 was the near-total absence of a recognized conservative viewpoint. There were, of course, individuals who were resolutely conservative, but there was nothing remotely approaching a body of conservative political principles, being applied aggressively to the nation's problems.

How all that has changed in the course of the last half century! To be sure, there are almost as many liberals as there ever were. But they are confronted now by a movement—the conservative movement—with its own numerous publications and spokesmen and a well-thought-out array of principles and doctrines, grounded in history and philosophy and thoroughly able to contend in the arena of political ideas.

Moreover, this viewpoint has captured the imagination of millions of Americans, to the point of becoming the foundation of a powerful political mass movement. Indeed, it is today one of the two major political viewpoints contending for dominance in American society.

That is a massive achievement, and one that bodes well for the future of this country.

Mr. Rusher was a longtime publisher of NATIONAL REVIEW.



The Bent Pin

BY FLORENCE KING

Land Sakes!

IT'S true what they say about ill winds blowing somebody some good. The mortgage meltdown has ripped the halo from homeowners and lifted the crown of thorns that has long pierced the brows of us renters, allowing us to breathe the fresh air of full citizenship.

I am a pariah from way back, a veteran of forms and applications with checkboxes labeled [ ] OWN or [ ] RENT, as well as [ ] CREDIT or [ ] CASH, and [ ] MARRIED or [ ] SINGLE. Checking the second box in each set marked me as Unsettled, Irresponsible, and Immature. Approved for nothing, turned down for everything—in short, a loser.

Now, in less than a year, the situation has been reversed and it's homeowners who are drawing the askance looks. Apartment living is due for a comeback, which holds out the hope of a renaissance of common sense.

I remember the golden age of apartment living before WWII. You could walk down a Washington street and pass one apartment building after another, something for every taste and pocketbook. Even those in modest neighborhoods had elegant names like "The Strathmore," marblesque lobbies with stone benches, and brass mailboxes gleaming from regular polishing by live-in janitors, who got a free apartment on top of their salaries. They also got Christmas bonuses from the tenants ($10 was considered about right), plus income from the arrangements their wives made with us. Janitors had to be married men (one of those unwritten, unfair laws that enable societies to function smoothly and safely), so we had on-site hiring for everything from standard services like laundry and cleaning all the way up to special diets and personal care—i.e., assisted living without having to make a $100,000 nonrefundable deposit.

Hearing about people "flipping" houses makes me remember the permanence of the pre-war rental market. Living in the same apartment for 20 years was not unusual, and I remember several tenants of even longer duration who left feet-first. Many renters were widows and retirees, but the average building was hardly a golden-age complex. There was always a bevy of "government girls" right out of a Ginger Rogers–Kate Hepburn movie; older career women who might have been their supervisors; teachers, librarians, employees of small neighborhood shops who walked to work; and streetcar motormen. In short, we had (bow your heads) Diversity! such as you only hear about in Diversity! conferences on C-SPAN. Yes, we were racially segregated but it's a dead cert that the bohemians with the Picasso posters in #11 and the Confederate Daughter with the bust of Robert E. Lee in #12 never would have met in any other housing arrangement, much less lived next door to each other.

Apartments had generally positive associations thanks to the movies. The characters the audience liked tended to live in them. Nick and Nora Charles might have had a co-op instead of a rental but in any case it was an apartment, and a chic one. They were also the places where a lot of fun was had and a lot of funny things happened. *My Sister Eileen* was set in a ratty New York basement apartment, but the bars on the windows, instead of keeping out murderers, provided the running joke: The cop walking his beat could not resist swiping his billy club over them, a compulsion that soon overcame every passing pedestrian with a walking stick, an umbrella, or a cane.

Everything changed after WWII when the G.I. Bill nationalized the American Dream and "Own your own home" (people stopped saying "house") became the Eleventh Commandment. The dizzying speed of suburban sprawl with its characterless, prefabricated boxes started a culture war. The opening salvo was fired by an American journalist inaptly named John Keats, who wrote a satire called *The Crack in the Picture Window.* This was followed by similar screeds, *No Down Payment*, and *The Split-Level Trap.* The suburbanite, said these authors, dwelt in a purgatory with no streets, just highways; no sidewalks, just shoulders: He had mortgaged his soul and become an unpaved person.

It did no good. Homeownership was in, apartments were out, and subliminal messages were everywhere. In postwar movies the bad guys lived in apartments; the only good guys so situated were "waiting for a house," and bad things happened to them while they waited. The post-war movie apartment was where suburban midwesterners had bittersweet affairs with ethnic girls. In *Two for the Seesaw*, the earnest WASP lug had never even been in an apartment before, which just goes to show you how unwholesome they are. In the end, he goes back to his wife: You can't beat the house odds. And, of course, there was *The Apartment*, a kind of title character in a morality play, an inanimate cause-of-it-all, a boys' treehouse that welcomes girls and brings out the worst in everybody.

Frankly, I am sick of the American Dream and I blame it and the politicians who trumpet it for the dire situation we are in. If the economy collapses it will be because we have tried to shove everybody into the middle class by making sure they have something to lose, but now that they are losing it, the civil unrest we sought to quell looms larger than ever.

Herewith a parable: In *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, the Nolans' immigrant grandmother tells them that to be "real" Americans they must own land. To this end she makes them a bank out of a tin can and nails it in the darkest corner of the closet, but before they can save nearly enough, the father dies and they have to pry up the bank to pay the undertaker for the cemetery plot. Afterwards, Francie asks her mother if she should nail the bank back, but Katie shakes her head. Placing the deed to the grave on top of the twisted can, she says, "No. We own land now." **NR**

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The Long View

BY ROB LONG

Larry King Live!

TRANSCRIPT:
MARCH 19, 2010

LARRY KING: From Concord, California! Hello!

CALLER: Hi, Larry. I'd just like to say to the family on your show that I thank them for what they're doing and hope they can get to a good place, like, um, a joyful place, with their situation.

LARRY KING: Good thought, caller. Well, gang? Can you? Is this a situation where you say, hey, life's tough but, you know, look what we got? We got each other and that good stuff? Henry?

HENRY PETERSON: Well, yeah, sure, Larry. I mean, we've got our health and whatnot. That's not what this is about.

LARRY KING: Michelle, you look angry. What's eating you?

MICHELLE PETERSON: Yeah, Larry, I am sort of angry. I mean, yeah. At first, Henry and I were paying our mortgage and we were like, "Okay, I guess we're like the only ones in America who are actually paying their mortgage," and we'd laugh about it because, you know, that was like a joke, right? I mean, how could we be the only people in America paying their mortgage, right?

LARRY KING: And so what happened when you found out that you were the only people in America paying their mortgage?

HENRY PETERSON: Well, you know, Larry, it's not like anyone called us.

MICHELLE PETERSON: No. The bank didn't tell us.

HENRY PETERSON: We saw it on *Anderson Cooper*.

MICHELLE PETERSON: I was sitting in the den and I was watching the news and all of a sudden I was like, "Is that our house?"

HENRY PETERSON: And that's when I noticed all the vans and the news guys out front.

MICHELLE PETERSON: Parking all over the place. Tearing up the lawn.

HENRY PETERSON: And I was shouting, "Hey! I pay for that lawn!"

MICHELLE PETERSON: It was a nightmare. Seriously.

LARRY KING: Tomorrow night! Nancy Pelosi sings Rodgers and Hart! From Westlake, Ohio, hello!

CALLER: Hey, Larry. Hey, Henry and Michelle. I was just wondering why you guys didn't sign up for that free-mortgage thing? My wife and I did and we're loving it. The forms were pretty easy to fill out, too. It was just like this one question, "Would you like someone else to pay your mortgage?" and then there were these two boxes below it, one was yes and the other was no, and so me and my wife, we checked, like, the yes box and so basically, that sort of took care of that situation. Wondering why you guys didn't get into that.

LARRY KING: Henry, you look angry.

HENRY PETERSON: Well, it's something we just didn't do. For whatever reason. Right, Michelle?

MICHELLE PETERSON: Henry, please. We've been over this.

LARRY KING: Tension city. Had this with wife number five. Didn't end well. What's up?

HENRY PETERSON: Go ahead, tell him.

MICHELLE PETERSON: Fine. Okay. It's my fault, okay, Larry? I was supposed to fill out the form. I was supposed to do all of that.

HENRY PETERSON: No, no. Don't put it like that. You were the one who said, "Hey, Henry, the president has a program to have someone else pay our mortgage," and I said, "Okay, Michelle, please look into it because I'm busy trying to figure out our taxes," and then you said, "Okay Henry, I'll do it." *I'll do it.* Those were your exact words. Exact words, Michelle.

MICHELLE PETERSON: Fine. Fine. And you know what? I own that, okay? My bad. I filled out the forms too late, and by the time they got to our application, everybody else's mortgage was being paid and we were shut out. But since you brought it up, let's talk about taxes, okay?

HENRY PETERSON: Can we move on?

MICHELLE PETERSON: No! No! Let's talk about it. Larry, did you know that there's only one family in America still paying their income taxes?

LARRY KING: Can't say as I did.

MICHELLE PETERSON: Well, you're looking at it. Me and Henry. Because somebody was too busy down at the store to figure out how to get into that new no-taxes bracket.

HENRY PETERSON: I was busy! Larry, I run a small business! I didn't have time to sort through all of those new tax things.

MICHELLE PETERSON: So not only are we the only people in America paying their mortgage, we're also the only people in America paying their income taxes.

LARRY KING: Weird! I got a business manager, he handles all of that for me. From Beaumont, Texas, hello!

CALLER: Hey, Larry. I was wondering if the Petersons have had any reaction from their neighbors.

LARRY KING: Good question. Any thanks or something? A pot luck in your honor?

MICHELLE PETERSON: Are you kidding?

HENRY PETERSON: They snicker at us. We're laughingstocks.

MICHELLE PETERSON: We actually got a visit from Child Protective Services, because they were worried that the twins were being raised by a couple that was seriously mentally impaired.

LARRY KING: Well, you're paying your mortgage and your taxes. What do you expect people to think? This weekend! Celebrities you're surprised aren't dead yet! With Ryan Seacrest!

Books, Arts & Manners

A Strong Foundation

DAVID T. BEITO & JONATHAN BEAN

In 1899, as Americans looked forward to a new century of progress, Booker T. Washington published *The Future of the American Negro*. A reporter asked him whether that future would include a black man as president. "I should hope so," Washington responded. He did not expect to see it in his lifetime: Blacks could not vote in the South, Jim Crow laws enforced rigid segregation, and lynching was rampant. Even so, Washington envisioned a day when blacks would achieve political equality—and he believed he had a role to play in making it come about. "One generation lays the foundation for succeeding generations," he wrote. By laying that foundation, Booker T. Washington helped make the election of Barack Obama possible.

That's not to say he would have entirely approved. Washington was a rock-ribbed Republican, and arguably America's first black conservative. Obama's brand of politics would have disappointed him deeply. On Election Night last November, it was John McCain—not Obama—who invoked Washington's name. Liberals, it turns out, don't have much use for Washington. Yet he has much to teach, especially as we enter the Age of Obama.

Booker T. Washington (1856–1915) possesses one of the best-known names in the history of black America. He was president of the renowned Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, an influential advocate for civil rights, and the most admired black man of his generation. For most of the 20th century, however, certain black leaders and academic liberals rejected his vision of racial advancement. Its emphasis on self-help, faith in entrepreneurship, and abject refusal to embrace victimhood seemed to demand as much from blacks as from whites. For these later figures, Washington was simply too conservative—the "Great Accommodator," in the words of his sneering rival, W. E. B. Du Bois. If Washington wasn't quite knocked out of black America's pantheon of heroes, he was certainly relegated to its second tier, as a man whose ideas were irrelevant.

Yet Washington's brand of conservatism never vanished completely—and the election of Barack Obama as president may make his ideas more relevant than ever. For years, of course, the standard view was that white racism was the primary reason for black misfortune. That's an increasingly difficult case to make now, when the main afflictions of black America are the breakdown of two-parent families, crime, drugs, lousy public schools, and unprecedented dependency on the whims of government bureaucrats—conditions that also drag down the white underclass. The time may have come to revive Booker T. Washington as an inspirational figure.

Washington demonstrated how it was possible to prosper during the worst of times. He was born a slave in Virginia, to a nameless white father and a mother who was a cook. Shortly after the Civil War, he went to work as a child laborer in a salt works. His sharp mind greatly impressed the wife of his employer, who taught him to read and opened the door to what would become his first great opportunity.

Washington's hunger for learning led him on a 500-mile trek to the Hampton Institute, a school that allowed blacks to work for their education. There, he came under the influence of the school's founder, Samuel Chapman Armstrong, a former Union officer who had commanded black troops at Petersburg during the Civil War. Armstrong tried to instill the habits of hard work and good character in his students and admonished them to "live down prejudice." Under his mentorship, Washington excelled at school. In 1881, when Armstrong received an inquiry from a white man founding a school for blacks in Alabama, he recommended his star student.

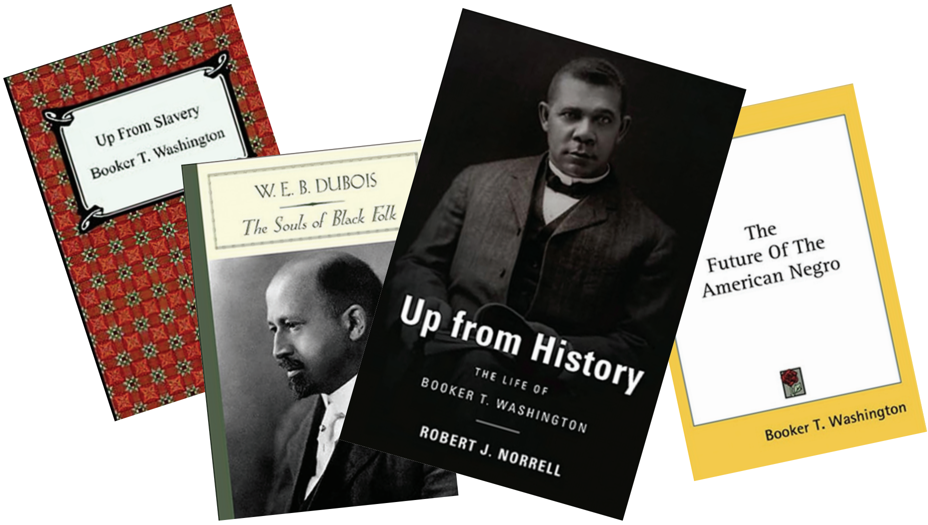
Washington became the first president of the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, originally founded as a teachers' college. Under Washington, the school trained students in the liberal arts and industrial labor. They learned to respect knowledge and hard work as requirements for becoming good teachers, craftsmen, and civic leaders. Washington's first class had only 30 students, but the school grew quickly and earned a national reputation for excellence. Above all, it was grounded in a philosophy of self-improvement. Rather than rely on white contractors to design the school and build it, Washington had students do the work. Through a shrewd combination of diplomacy, persistence, and charisma, he persuaded both blacks and whites to support the institution. His supporters included some of the wealthiest men in the United States: Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, and Julius Rosenwald (CEO of Sears Roebuck). By the turn of the century, Tuskegee was enrolling 1,000 students, all of them black. Tuskegee had more students than the two leading white institutions in the state—the University of Alabama and Auburn—combined.

When Frederick Douglass died in 1895, Washington immediately succeeded him as black America's most prominent figure—a role in which he would continue until his own death two decades later. The two men had much in common. Like Douglass, Washington urged blacks to put their trust in the bourgeois virtues embraced by other Americans. "Each day," Washington wrote, "convinces me that the salvation of the negro in this country will be in his cultivation of habits of thrift, economy, honesty, the acquiring of education, Christian character, property and industrial skill." He stressed property ownership as a means to enhance "mental discipline, mental grasp and control." Tuskegee's requirement that students learn highly paid industrial skills fostered these goals of self-help and capitalist uplift.

Just as Douglass told his life story in an autobiography, Booker T. Washington

Mr. Beito is a professor in the department of history at the University of Alabama, and author (with Linda Royster Beito) of Black Maverick: T. R. M. Howard's Fight for Civil Rights and Economic Power. *Mr. Bean is a research fellow with the Independent Institute, professor of history at Southern Illinois University, and author of* Race and Liberty in America: The Essential Reader *(University Press of Kentucky, forthcoming in 2009).*

authored *Up from Slavery* (1901)—a book that inspired generations of black Americans with his personal account of success. The message was clear: The self-made success of a Douglass or Washington was real, not theoretical. Both men had risen from slavery. If they could do it, others could lift themselves up as well.



Washington's reputation suffered because his conservative values clashed with demands for instant justice. For years after his death, liberal historians and black leaders rejected his methods as either outmoded or ineffective. For these critics, the true heir of Douglass was W. E. B. Du Bois, a onetime admirer of Washington who turned to attacking Washington's emphasis on self-help in books such as *The Souls of Black Folk*. Du Bois eventually abandoned the United States, became a Communist, and died as a citizen of Ghana—a series of facts that may heighten his appeal among academic leftists. They argued that Washington had sacrificed black political equality on the altar of free-market greed and submission to white authority. Capitalism, many of them claimed, was the source of racism rather than its solution. C. Vann Woodward, a prominent historian of the South, charged Washington with shortchanging the interests of blacks by singlemindedly pushing "free enterprise, competition, and *laissez faire*" and failing to speak out against the "caste system and the barbarities of the mob." Louis R. Harlan, Washington's biographer, criticized his subject's "mealy-mouthed moderation in the face of racial injustice." Today, students are often taught to think of Washington as an "Uncle Tom." The self-exiled Du Bois becomes a hero of racial authenticity while Washington, the promoter of education and builder of business, transforms into a kind of villain—or at least the dupe of a racist white America.

This gross caricature is now coming under a fierce assault led by Robert J. Norrell of the University of Tennessee. In his magisterial *Up from History: The Life of Booker T. Washington* (Belknap, 528 pp., $35), Norrell explodes the most common myths about Washington. He documents in great detail Washington's efforts to encourage and fund court challenges to segregation laws and disfranchisement. Washington spoke out publicly against these injustices, often at great risk to his own life, far more than his critics have acknowledged. Norrell's scholarship vindicates the efforts of Lee H. Walker, a retired business executive who has promoted Washingtonian values through several books of his own, including *The Conscience of Conservative Blacks* (2005), *Booker T. Washington: A Re-Examination* (2008), and *Rediscovering Black Conservatism* (forthcoming, 2009). But Norrell's *Up from History* is the tour de force that ought to spark a rethinking of Washington's significance in his time and ours.

One of the most important contributions of Norrell's book is to show how the leading racists of the day, such as Rep. J. Thomas Heflin (D., Ala.) and Sen. Benjamin "Pitchfork" Tillman (D., S.C.), feared and denounced Washington's strategy to educate blacks and equip them with economic skills. In 1901, southern Democrats raged when Theodore Roosevelt invited Washington, the leading black Republican, to dinner at the White House. The simple act of dining together violated the "unwritten rule" of white supremacists: Interracial dining implied "social equality" and "amalgamation," and—if left unchecked—"miscegenation." Heflin publicly said that "no great harm would have been done" if someone had tossed a bomb into the room. For the rest of Washington's life, southern Democrats denounced him for this single act of exchanging food across the table. His real crime, beyond violating the "unwritten rule," was leading blacks to vote Republican—when and where they could—and getting black Republicans appointed to patronage positions. Norrell rightly concludes that Washington's struggle to "sustain blacks' morale at a terrible time must be counted among the heroic efforts in American history." Indeed, if today's GOP seeks greater minority support, it might start by adding Washington (and Douglass) to their annual Lincoln Day celebrations.

Norrell also debunks the picture of Washington as an "Uncle Tom" who submitted to white oppression. In a hostile environment, Washington repeatedly spoke out against lynching, disfranchisement, and segregation. He also successfully demanded that blacks receive *some* school funding when there was a movement to eliminate it.

On lynching, Washington published letters in newspapers denouncing the barbarism of white-on-black violence. In one letter, he cited the horrific statistics and then described how one man "was publicly burned in open daylight in the presence of women and children, after oil had been poured upon his body, at Greenville, Tex., and reports state that a thousand people witnessed the spectacle in the open square of the town. One other victim was eighty years of age. How long can our Christian civilization stand this?"

Even so, Washington continued to emphasize self-improvement—a strategy that paid off. Economic historians have documented the progress of black farmers, workers, and business owners—progress made possible because "conservative" courts upheld the right to work against the lily-white unionism of the time. In his 1977 book *Competition and Coercion*, Robert Higgs showed that the percentage of black farmers in the

THE NATIONAL REVIEW

KARL ROVE, MICHAEL NOVAK & FR. ROBERT SIRICO sign on as new speakers

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Thur/July 9	AT SEA		morning, afternoon seminars evening cocktail reception
Fri/July 10	Dubrovnik, Croatia	8AM-6PM	late-night smoker
Sat/July 11	Corfu, Greece	8AM-6PM	
Sun/July 12	Katakolon, Greece	7AM-2PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
Mon/July 13	Santorini, Greece	8AM-9PM	
Tue/July 14	Ephesus, Turkey	7AM-7PM	"night owl" session
Wed/July 15	Piraeus, Greece	8AM-6PM	"night owl" session
Thur/July 16	AT SEA		morning, afternoon seminars late-night smoker
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South who were landowners increased from virtually zero in 1865 to 25 percent by 1910. In the 1867–1910 period, black income in the South grew faster than white income. Nationwide, the number of black businesses skyrocketed from 4,000 to 50,000. Washington played a key role in nurturing these enterprises by creating the National Negro Business League in 1900. During the same period, blacks created a vast network of fraternal societies that used mutual aid to provide health insurance and other services.

Despite the scars left by slavery, the black family not only survived but became stronger. Herbert Gutman found that typically 80 percent of black families had a husband present—a far cry from the current situation. Washington's longing for an intact family—something slavery denied him—made him appreciate the institution all the more. In *Up from Slavery*, he regretted that his work took "so much of the time away from my family, where, of all places in the world, I delight to be." When others said that black families could not survive and prosper, Washington's message was "Yes, we can."

As Norrell describes, gains in education provide perhaps the clearest vindication of Washington's efforts. He had no small role in the spectacular increase in the literacy rate for blacks in the South from 5 percent in 1865 to 70 percent in 1910. Although white politicians in the South shunted blacks into inferior schools, Washington was instrumental in providing them with alternatives in the private sector. It was largely because of his influence, for example, that Julius Rosenwald financed the building of 5,500 black schools throughout the South (known as the "Rosenwald schools").

That these gains occurred despite the loss of political rights and amidst a horrific wave of lynchings makes them all the more heroic. No person was more important in making them happen than Booker T. Washington. The continued rise of the black middle class was on the foundation laid by Washingtonian strategies. Between 1940 and 1960, the proportion of black men in middle-class jobs increased from one out of ten to one out of four. Indeed, without Washington, it is hard to imagine the rise of the black middle class that ultimately created the civil-rights movement. Blacks in the old middle class provided the major leadership of the movement and had the necessary economic clout to make it successful. They did not depend on government jobs, because there were few open to blacks. The successes of the civil-rights movement were built upon the efforts of figures such as Arthur G. Gaston of Birmingham, perhaps the richest black man in America during the 1950s and 1960s. He helped finance the Montgomery Boycott and repeatedly bailed Martin Luther King Jr. and his allies out of jail. For Gaston, Washington was an inspiration. He carried a well-thumbed copy of *Up from Slavery* and stressed the importance of black business investment and "green power."

If President Obama were to study Washington as intently as Gaston did, he might find a kindred soul—a man far more like himself than Abraham Lincoln, whom he tries so vigorously to emulate. Like Obama, Washington came from mixed parentage, grew up in modest circumstances, and never knew his father. Both were raised almost entirely by women who had a tremendous influence on their work ethic and life goals. Each overcame early disadvantages by obtaining an education through grit, determination, and some measure of luck. From an early age, both were comfortable in the presence of powerful whites. As he grew to manhood, Washington anticipated Obama's remarkable ability to reassure whites and forge cross-racial alliances. This description (by a fellow organizer) of a young Obama as community organizer could easily apply to Washington as he created Tuskegee: "Personality-wise, Barack did not like direct confrontation. . . . He was a very nice young man, very polite. . . . But challenging power was not an issue for him. Lack of civility was."

Each man sought the end goals of interracial reconciliation. In predicting that a black man would occupy the presidency, Washington, like Obama, showed himself to be a man of profound "hope." Blacks as a whole revered Washington to the same degree as they now do Obama. In 1908, a neutral observer wrote that nearly all good black homes had Washington's picture "over the fireplace with a little framed motto expressing his gospel of work and service."

"Don't get all Constitutiony on me, counselor."

During his campaign, Obama gained publicity and credibility by stressing Washingtonian themes such as "personal responsibility," much to the applause of his audiences. In one speech, he declared that government action will not "make a difference—at least not enough of a difference—if we also don't at the same time seize more responsibility in our own lives."

Despite this rhetoric, Obama's worldview is profoundly different from that of Washington. Washington repeatedly emphasized that thrift was the basis of advancement. "You cannot plant a tree in air," he wrote, "and have it live." The secret of success was to shun excessive debt, delay gratification, and "learn the saving habit; until we learn to save every nickel." Washington rejected the philosophy that people could spend their way to success. While Obama believes that government can create jobs simply through spending, Washington put his trust in the resourcefulness of ordinary individuals to accomplish this goal. He had, he said, "little patience with any man, white or black, with education, who goes through the country whining and crying because nobody will give him a job of work. A man with education should be able to create a job for himself, but in doing so he may have to begin at the very bottom." Progress ultimately rested on a solid foundation of hard work, thrift, and production. Excessive debt, especially without the means to repay it, only created a trap leading to more debt and regress. It is doubtful that Washington could have imagined the endless bailouts of our own day. They certainly would have appalled him.

In the end, it's not just black Americans who would benefit from rediscovering Washington—but all Americans, no matter what their race. In the 21st century, the United States will prosper or stagnate to the degree it accepts or rejects Washington's principles of individual creativity, self-help, and voluntary cooperation. **NR**

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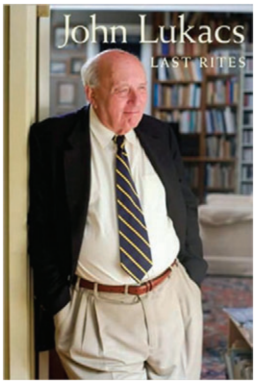


Last Rites,
by John Lukacs
(Yale, 208 pp., $25)

JOHN LUKACS is an American historian of Hungarian origin who achieved wide public notice comparatively late in life with books such as *Five Days in London: May 1940*. In that book he maintained that his hero, Winston Churchill, had saved the world from the utter barbarism of the Nazis by deciding to fight on, when the decision to do so was by no means unanimously approved or a foregone conclusion. There was, of course, a wider historiographical point being made here: that history is not determined by impersonal forces, or by impersonal forces alone, but that the character of prominent men, and the decisions that emerge from that character, actually matter, and matter decisively.

Lukacs came to the United States in 1946, having experienced enough history in his first 22 years to last for several lifetimes. His experience no doubt gave him the conviction that the fundamental conflict of human existence, at least in its public manifestations, is between civilization and barbarism, and he opted for the former. America then seemed to him the repository of civilization, a kind of Alexandrian library of all that European civilization had achieved but had so willfully and completely destroyed; it was, in effect, the last hope of the bourgeois culture to which he was deeply attached. He has since modified his opinion somewhat.

Now in his 86th year, he has produced a short book that is not quite memoir, not quite philosophical treatise, but something in between. The nearest equivalent I can think of is Somerset Maugham's *The Summing Up*, which was a distillation of the lessons that Maugham had learned from life and the practice of literature. Professor Lukacs will probably be consoled to know that Maugham went on to write quite a few more books after he had thus summed up, many of them still in print: So there is life after summation.

There is one literary aspect of his book that I found slightly disconcerting, namely his propensity to quote himself. For example, he repeatedly cites his own diary in his footnotes. Now footnotes are usually employed to provide subsidiary evidence for, or make subsidiary points to, assertions in the text. Repeatedly to quote oneself is bound to give the impression, probably false, of undue egotism and self-satisfaction. All authors are egotistical to an extent, of course, for they must believe that they have something to say that it would pay others to read; but they should always beware of falling into the Bellman's fallacy in *The Hunting of the Snark*, namely that "what I tell you three times is true."

Lukacs begins the book with a philosophical excursus on the epistemology of history. Some of his reflections seem to me dangerous, in the sense of conducing to a subjectivism that is one of the causes of the destruction of the bourgeois civilization that he so loved: "Isn't Objectivity an ideal? No: because the purpose of human knowledge—indeed of human life itself—is not accuracy, and not even certainty; it is understanding." Combined with his belief that there are no such things as facts, but only events, the very observation of which alters them, the above passage leads (I think) to the terrible deformation of intellectual life in which one person's view is held to be as valid as another's merely because it is held with equal conviction.

That past assertions taken to be facts have turned out to be not facts at all cannot be an argument against factuality, for the argument against factuality is based upon a fact. If the fact is true, the argument is unsound; if the fact is false, the argument is also unsound; therefore it is unsound. And it seems unwise of Lukacs to wander, as he does, into epistemological speculations based upon Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, for even quantum physicists have difficulty in understanding quantum physics and its philosophical implications. The intelligent should not rush in where genius fears to tread.

I think that what Lukacs is trying to say is this: One cannot remove human intention from history or the writing of it. Moreover, the whole of history—"what actually happened," in Ranke's famous phrase—can never be captured because language is too blunt an instrument. To capture everything in words is like trying to catch bacteria with a fishing net. It can't be done; but that doesn't mean that the fish caught in the net are not real fish, with no objective existence. Words are wise men's counters; but they are the money of fools.

Perhaps of more interest to the general reader are Lukacs's subsequent reflections upon the state of the world. Here I confess that I am much in sympathy with his lament, though I cannot quite make up my mind whether this is because of the state of the world, objectively considered, or my approaching old age. (How I'm looking forward to my concessionary rates for entry to French museums—though, knowing my luck, they will be withdrawn as an economy measure just as I reach the age!)

Lukacs tells us that an era half a millennium long, that of the bourgeois, has now drawn definitively to a close. Of course, there are still cultivated people who read books and listen to real music, who behave with a certain ceremoniousness and dress without wishing to appear as if they had just emerged from a slum tenement despite being enormously rich; but they are a decreasing minority, who feel themselves under siege by the meretriciousness of popular culture combined with an ideological imperative to genuflect before the demotic. Lukacs, perhaps because of his Hungarian heritage (for Hungary, after all, has had one of the highest suicide rates in the world ever since anyone ever thought to keep records of such matters), is profoundly pessimistic: The bourgeois eggs, in his view, will never be reconstituted from the proletarianized omelet.

He is insistent that the character of a people is more important than its formal political institutions, and that national

Mr. Daniels, a doctor, is the author of several travel books, including Monrovia Mon Amour *and* Utopias Elsewhere.

character can change for the worse (he doesn't say so, but I suspect that he thinks deterioration is fast, while improvement is slow). Americans, in his opinion, are less reflective, shallower, and more vulgar and egotistical than they were when he first arrived in the country. There was then a recognizable upper class, with refinement of manners and an interest in something other than money; now, there remains an elite (for no society is without one), but it is a much cruder one, consisting merely of the poor man writ rich. People are also more individualistic now than they were, but with less individuality.

Lukacs also laments the decline of real patriotism in favor of nationalism. Patriotism, or love of country, is primarily defensive and pacific, and of course conservative since it wants to preserve what it loves; nationalism, by contrast, is aggressive and warlike, and usually entails despising other nations or cultures, utilizing the past to justify self-aggrandizement rather than the preservation of excellent traditions. It is a revolutionary rather than a preservative force; and it is driven by hatred rather than by love.

Technology is another bugbear of his, one that according to him is hollowing out modern life. Because of their constant resort to electronic gadgetry, for example, young Americans are not proficient in the use of their own language; Lukacs notices that young Hungarians, until recently less familiar with and obsessed by such gadgetry, at least wrote and spelled their language correctly. There can be no bourgeois society without refinement of language; Lukacs upbraids the supposedly patrician George H. W. Bush for using the word "grandkids." A society is classless when argot becomes the standard language.

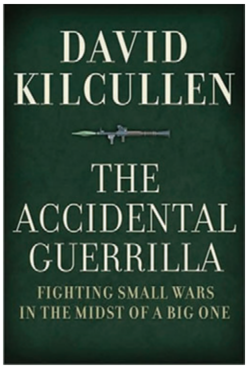
I sympathize viscerally with a lot of what Lukacs says. I live in a country, Britain, in which things have gone a lot farther than in America: where, for example, no man can become a celebrity TV chef unless he swears like a trooper and expletives make up half his utterances (the very concept of a celebrity chef is, of course, of surpassing vulgarity). The bourgeoisie has almost ceased to exist in Britain: There are people with more money and less money, but they have very similar tastes. It is only the scale of indulgence in them that varies, not what is indulged in. Even the grandchildren of the monarch are culturally indistinguishable from children of the underclass.

At this point, I have to rein myself in, before I begin to sound like a latter-day Joseph de Maistre. There are still so many interesting books published, for example, that I regret that I shall have time to read only an infinitesimal portion of them before I die; notwithstanding a collapse in educational standards, and the ability of children to read, scholarship somehow survives and people still have arresting and original ideas. I have no difficulty in finding good music or in visiting good exhibitions. It is still possible to avoid the worst excesses of the demotic revolution and to associate with like-minded people.

Who knows? Perhaps the current crisis will cause some people to reevaluate the bourgeois virtues. My sympathy for Lukacs's nostalgia for a more cultivated age is tempered by an awareness that many men suppose that nothing will ever be the same after them. Lukacs doesn't exactly say with Nero "What an artist dies in me," but he does seem to say "What an age dies with me." Lukacs quotes La Rochefoucauld to the effect that things are seldom as good or as bad as people think them—but he then puts this wise dictum out of his mind. Of course, La Rochefoucauld did not say that things were *never* as bad as people think them. **NR**

Why Do They Fight?

BING WEST


DAVID
KILCULLEN
THE
ACCIDENTAL
GUERRILLA
FIGHTING SMALL WARS
IN THE MIDST OF A BIG ONE

The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One, by David Kilcullen (Oxford, 384 pp., $27.95)

A THOUGHTFUL former infantry officer, David Kilcullen is respected in military circles: He knows his way around a battlefield, and wrote his Ph.D. thesis on

Mr. West, a former combat Marine and former assistant secretary of defense, is the author of The Strongest Tribe *and four other books on counterinsurgency.*

GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

Imagine that huge ogre glaring green
Burst in this Christmas, snorting on a charger,
Flashing a hatchet, holding a bright sprig
Of holly, thundering his cold steel challenge.

Comic almost but terrible to face
This guest, especially when all glows pleasant
Around the blazing tree so snug and green
While outside everything grips white with freezing.

Crying your lineage, "Gawain, Gawain . . ." Sir,
Accept the dare: Decapitate the monster,
Witness his black sap spurting, sticking like
Molasses on the faces of your children.

Time will not prove you braver or more strong
Than you stand at this moment; in the death grapple
Finally you shall abide his sequel blow
After black siege in the ice-sheeted chapel.

—RICHARD O'CONNELL

insurgency in Indonesia. This is, in short, a man the Obama administration would be well advised to appoint to a national-security post.

In *The Accidental Guerrilla*, he adopts an academic tone in addressing both practical military matters and abstract geopolitical theories—two subjects it's very difficult to combine in one book. He begins by advancing four "models" that explain the causes of modern-day insurgencies. He then synthesizes them into what he calls the "Accidental Guerrilla Syndrome": Islamic extremists move into an ungoverned or conflict-laden area where they dominate by combining violence with persuasion. When host-nation or U.S. forces counterattack with excessive force, the locals respond by fighting alongside the terrorists. Thus "our too-willing and heavy-handed interventions" create accidental guerrillas.

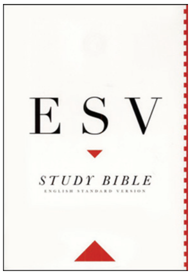
"They fight us," he argues, "not because they seek our destruction, but because they are encouraged by a cynical, manipulative clique of *takfiri* terrorists which, though tiny in number, has been catapulted to great political influence and prestige because of our reaction to 9/11." Our ill-advised military actions, he concludes, "have turned a mouse into an elephant."

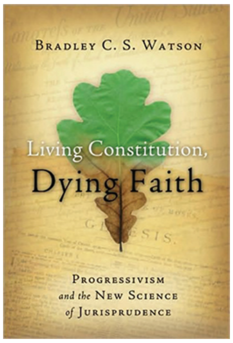
Turning to Iraq, Kilcullen explains that he was appointed in early 2007 by the State Department as senior counterinsurgency adviser to Gen. David Petraeus. Kilcullen candidly admits that the 2007 U.S./Coalition Campaign Plan, to which he contributed, envisioned imposing sufficient security to allow Iraq's leaders to reach a "grand bargain" at the top. Instead, the tribes aligned with American and Iraqi security forces at the bottom level, while the top remained divided.

He cites the tribal revolt as "the most significant change in the Iraqi operating environment." The Sunnis were the accidental guerrillas. Once they came over to the American side, the terrorists were exposed. Kilcullen points to mid-2007 as the key date in the Sunni revolt; in fact, the Sunni "Awakening" occurred in the fall of 2006 in Anbar province, scene of the war's fiercest fighting and controlled by the Marine Expeditionary Force. In 2006, out on the western front (Anbar), the troops were patrolling from small outposts among the population; in Baghdad, the troops had pulled back to large Forward Operating Bases, or FOBs.

Shelf Life

THE transformation of the judiciary into an activist legislator of social change has been one of the most remarked-upon—and, among conservatives, decried—political developments of the past century. In ***Living Constitution, Dying Faith: Progressivism and the New Science of Jurisprudence*** (ISI, 241 pp., $25), political philosopher Bradley C. S. Watson does an impressive job of analyzing how, exactly, this happened. The judges of today play a dramatically different role than was envisioned for them in the Constitution, largely because they no longer consider themselves primarily as backward-looking servants of timeless truths embodied in that document. Instead, notes Watson, they view themselves as mediators of progress away from—that is to say, *up from*—the ideas of the original Constitution. Two late-19th-century currents of thought combined to make this shift possible: social Darwinism and pragmatism. The common thread between the two was a philosophy of history that made it easy to relativize ideas of the past, and thus the Constitution itself. Writes Watson: "Having rooted itself so firmly in the thought that guides the Western world as a whole, and having gained so much strength and momentum on its virtually uninterrupted path, [the new jurisprudence] will not be slowed down, or wiped clean, any time soon. Its success is marked by the fact that it no longer seeks victory, only legitimation in a constitutional system still at odds with it."





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■ One of the most remarkable recent success stories in publishing is Crossway's English Standard Version translation of the Bible. In the face of an unprecedented glut of Bible translations, the ESV, which came out in 2001, has managed to win a great deal of acceptance among conservative readers looking for a relatively literal modern rendering. A couple of recent editions may make it even more popular: The massive new ***ESV Study Bible*** (Crossway, 2,752 pp., $49.99) is now the best conservative study Bible on the market—a comprehensive resource with clearly designed maps and diagrams as well as exhaustive notes. And Oxford's new ***English Standard Version Bible with Apocrypha*** (1,446 pp., $25) includes the books traditionally omitted by the Protestant canon—and thus makes the ESV more useful to Catholic and Orthodox readers. Even before this ecumenical edition, the prominent Catholic theologian Fr. Richard John Neuhaus called the ESV "quite splendid"; I think he would have agreed it's getting even better.

—MICHAEL POTEMRA

"I frequently went out [in Baghdad in 2007] with battalions, companies, or adviser teams," Kilcullen writes, "who needed a little 'on-field coaching' to understand the new approach." It is false, though, to imply that the "new approach" of population-protection tactics began in 2007. Those tactics—which facilitated the Sunni rebellion—had succeeded in Anbar before the surge in Baghdad began. The brilliance of General Petraeus and Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno, his corps commander, lay in taking the Anbar model and applying it elsewhere, welcoming Sunnis onto the coalition side. Thus Petraeus and Odierno not only saved Baghdad; they also concluded the war, by aligning Sunni neighborhood-watch groups with Iraqi army and police units across Iraq.

The subtitle of the book is "Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One," and appropriately so: Kilcullen's focus is on the political context and the historical setting, rather than the fighting itself. Also, he discusses the smaller (than Iraq) conflict in Afghanistan: There and in western Pakistan, Kilcullen explains, the tough, acephalous Pashtun tribes are the accidental guerrillas who have aligned with the Taliban. "If we can brush the enemy out of the way," he writes, "marginalize them politically, root out insurgent infrastructure, and make local communities self-defending, we can inoculate the population against the Taliban." Unfortunately, he does not explain why we Americans, and the Afghan government, have been unable for eight years to contain the Taliban. If we haven't analyzed why we have failed, it's hard to see how we can succeed.

Kilcullen observes that foreign troops must forge "partnerships and trusted networks with at-risk communities" at the ground level. "Our job is to support where needed," he writes, "and to realize this will play out in ways that . . . are fundamentally unpredictable." He demonstrates his military expertise by acknowledging that unpredictability; no one, after all, predicted the Sunni tribal revolt. Sheik Abu Risha led that rebellion; shortly before he was killed by al-Qaeda in 2007, I asked him why the Sunnis had not come over earlier, sparing us and them much bloodshed. "You Americans couldn't convince us," he replied. "We Sunnis had to convince ourselves."

How such tribal conviction metastasizes into violent action against Islamic extremists is a mystery; and how to reach that point in Afghanistan is in basic dispute. On one hand, the U.S. Marines have concluded from Iraq that they can organize the indigenous security forces and the tribes, and then pull out. They reject nation building as a military mission. On the other hand, the leadership in the Pentagon seems to side with Kilcullen, who argues that in Afghanistan we must first build a nation "with the host government genuinely and effectively in the lead," then fight the insurgency, and, last, deal with the opium trade. Whether nation building is ancillary or central to the counterinsurgency campaign makes a huge difference in the size and deployment of resources, military and civilian.

Although his chapters are a bit discursive, the author argues strongly for a grand strategy over the next several decades—one with a less military emphasis, so that we do not create "the accidental guerrilla." He concludes by advocating that 80 percent of our future counterinsurgency effort be devoted to political dialogue, economic development, and strategic information efforts to offset radical Islamic propaganda.

Kilcullen is especially effective in limning the ferocity of the Afghan guerrillas, accidental and otherwise. His scholarship, both erudite and courageous, reminds the reader of Robert Kaplan. He does not, however, prescribe how Americans can transform a corrupt host government and thrust it into the lead in defeating those guerrillas. While he advocates tribal engagements, he questions whether "we could succeed in subduing a people who had fought tooth and nail to retain their independence from all invaders in recorded history, and in creating a governed space, in the FATA [the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in western Pakistan]."

He thus appears to be scrupulously fair, by taking both sides on the issue at stake: We foreigners can implement a strategy that defeats the Taliban, and we cannot. We can nation-build, and we cannot.

We are all, then, left waiting for that unpredictable, incandescent moment when Afghan security forces or tribal clans drive out the Taliban. And none of us knows whether or how that will happen. **NR**

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Film

The Way We Live Now

ROSS DOUTHAT

LAST year, Kay Hymowitz published two essays in *City Journal*, the Manhattan Institute's fine quarterly, on dating and the modern twentysomething male. The first was a critique of the culture of masculine adultescence—the way that men behave, and misbehave, in the long limbo that increasingly yawns between their teens and the assumption of marital and paternal responsibility. Hymowitz portrayed a generation of young men content to while away their hours "in a playground of drinking, hooking up, playing *Halo 3*, and, in many cases, underachieving." This beer-guzzling, porn-browsing, scatology-minded man-child, she wrote, is at once an "irritating mystery or a source of heartbreak" to women, and the embodiment of our culture's failure to "define worthy aspirations" for its young people. We're allowing men to occupy their default state, adolescence, far too happily and for far too long.

The second essay, penned a few months later, pivoted off the response the first piece provoked from quite a few male readers. "Their argument," Hymowitz wrote, is that today's man-child is putting off adulthood "not because he's immature but because he's angry. He's angry because he thinks that young women are dishonest, self-involved, slutty, manipulative, shallow, controlling, and gold-digging. . . . He's angry because he thinks that marriage these days is a raw deal for men." Feminism, her correspondents suggested, had created a generation of women who expect to have it all—casual sex when they feel like casual sex and chivalry when they feel like chivalry; alpha males who are nonetheless excruciatingly sensitive; high-paying, high-powered careers and the option to give them up and live off their mate's six-figure income. Why shouldn't men say thanks, but no thanks, to these impossible demands? Why shouldn't they, instead, turn post-feminist freedom to their own advantage, and become the exploiters rather than the exploitees?

The portrait painted by essay number one—a dating scene thick with child-men who need to grow up to become worthy of their women—has provided grist for more than a few recent blockbusters, Judd Apatow's raunchy romances chief among them. But while there have been attempts, over the last decade or so, to fashion scabrous satires out of the much darker and dog-eat-dog dynamic suggested by essay number two, in Hollywood they've usually been confined (for obvious reasons) to the art-house margins—the land of Bret Easton Ellis adaptations and Neil LaBute's pitch-black comedies.

It should go without saying that *He's Just Not That Into You*, this winter's hit romantic comedy, is something less than a scabrous satire of contemporary mores. But it's not *that* far from being one, and as a result it's considerably more interesting than you'd expect from a movie based on a self-help book spawned by a line in an episode of *Sex and the City*. From its title on down, this is a rare romantic comedy that's largely unromantic—until the demands of a Hollywood ending kick in, at least. And it goes further than most mainstream entertainments in portraying a dating scene that's essentially Darwinian, rather than lovey-dovey, and that's filled with unlikeable people scrabbling over one another for advantage.

I don't want to claim that this is entirely intentional. The unlikeability quotient of the various characters—this is one of those group rom-coms, like the unbearable *Love Actually* from several years ago, that follow a gaggle of interconnected lovers as they couple and decouple—probably owes as much to lousy script-writing as to any deeper sociological critique. But it's still striking to encounter a star-studded Hollywood production that's willing to throw such an unflattering light on its characters and their milieu. And while I wouldn't say this is a good film, exactly, at the very least it's more of a "The Way We Live Now" conversation-starter than most of its competition in the genre.

As for the plot—well, follow me here: Gigi (Ginnifer Goodwin) is a man-crazy Baltimorean who goes on a date with Conor (Kevin Connolly); he never calls her back, so she starts stalking him, and along the way befriends his bartender pal Alex (Justin Long), a womanizer who explains to her all the tricks that men use to ditch women they aren't interested in. Meanwhile, the wimpy Conor is kinda-sorta dating the lubricious Anna (Scarlett Johansson), who keeps leading him on while she debates whether to follow the advice of her pal Mary (Drew Barrymore) and make a play for Ben (Bradley Cooper), the hot, horndog husband of the pinched, remodeling-obsessed Janine (Jennifer Connelly), whose co-worker Beth (Jennifer Aniston) has a long-time live-in boyfriend (Ben Affleck) who would rather move back to his boat than suck it up and marry her.

Like I said—unpleasant people. All the characters have hip jobs—at advertising firms, or the local gay paper—and wear hip clothes to hip bars and obsess about their personal lives. (This is very much a pre-financial-crash movie.) Nobody has kids, and only the shrewish Janine seems to want them. Everybody jaws on cell phones—though the movie still feels somewhat behind the texting, Twittering times—but nobody actually connects. The younger characters are insipid, and the older ones unpleasant: The thirtysomething men pine for their lost adultescence; the thirtysomething women look like they spend every waking minute on the StairMaster. Only the gay supporting players, a slew of stereotypes swishing in the background, seem to be having any fun.

And for most of its running time, the movie seems inclined to keep its roster of non-charmers at arm's length. *He's Just Not That Into You* isn't quite judgmental, but neither does it seem to *admire* its protagonists' essential solipsism in the way that, say, the big-screen *Sex and the City* did last summer. This distancing gets thrown over somewhat at the end, when two-thirds of the cast achieve some kind of romantic happiness: Cads become romantics, the marriage-averse cave and buy a ring, and only the adulterous are delivered to true loneliness. But the cheerful final course doesn't quite wash away the rest of the meal, which has a taste you don't expect from an entertainment like this: dark, and bitter, and something like the truth. **NR**

City Desk

Duty Dance

RICHARD BROOKHISER

ALTHOUGH it is not full day, the day has begun. The sun is up, life stirs. The Watchers line the way. None of us can remember a time when they were not here, and they will be here long after we have gone. Men and women, young and old, they share a task, and their task is to watch. It is an obligation the Watchers must not fail, for the Law has decreed it.

What is this? *King Solomon's Mines*? *The Jungle Book*? *The Fellowship of the Ring*? No—it is New York car owners coping with alternate-side parking.

My block is an ordinary Manhattan block. It is in the grid, on that portion of the East Side where blocks are half as long as those to the west. It has 40 parking spaces, give or take a fire hydrant. The cars that fill them track the fashions of the end of Detroit: rounded, slightly bulging as if overinflated. They are a blur to me, but for a few regulars: a long white antique with tail fins; a yellow European half car, its antimatter. What is impossible to miss is the ritual of alternate-side parking.

The law sets aside times every week when cars must leave one curb of every street in the city so that it can be swept. These times are posted on metal signs decorated with push brooms (though the sweeping is actually done by trucks). The south side of my block must be vacant from 8 A.M. to 9:30 A.M. Mondays and Thursdays, the north side at the same time Tuesdays and Fridays. Hence the morning line-up.

That is the basic situation. Is it sensible? Other American cities lack such regulations, and yet their streets are not blocked with slumdog piles of garbage. Last summer alternate-side parking was suspended in part of Brooklyn, and a study found "minimal impact." Even cities in Sweden have relaxed their alternate-parking rules.

This being New York, no situation is ever basic. The rules are waived for 34 holidays, some of them civic—July 4, Labor Day, Thanksgiving—others holy, depending on which religion you profess. The Feast of the Immaculate Conception follows hard on the heels of Idul-Adha. Diwali gets a shout-out after Simchat Torah. What with four days for Passover and two each for Shavuot and Sukkot, Judaism wields the most power over parking. Mearsheimer and Walt would say that is because Jews wield so much power; a sociologist of religion would point out the Lord gave them a load of holidays.

The rules are also waived for nature. When she drops eight inches of snow on the city, cars are stuck in the drifts like ice cubes in a tray. Even the city fathers do not expect motorists to chip them out and slide them to some other vacancy. Mightier than the weather is politics. This winter there have been thirteen declared snow days, as opposed to three the winter before. Global cooling? It was snowy this winter, especially early on. But later on, specifically next November, our mayor will stand for reelection. Every politician in the city remembers the fate of John Lindsay, hammered for failing to plow the streets of Queens after the snowfalls of February 1969. Lindsay actually won his race that fall, but it was a near-run thing: He lost the Republican primary and had to run and win as a Liberal, without $70 million to spend. Adventures in democracy are for the civics texts, so keep those snow days coming.

How do drivers keep track of their obligations and the exceptions? One forgetful but ingenious city dweller shared a solution on a site called lifehacker.com. "While dozing off the other night I suddenly feared that I had parked my car in a 6AM street sweeping zone." He got up, clicked on Google Maps, and placed its observing avatar on the block where he had parked. He found a sign, zoomed in, and saw that the resolution was good enough to read that "street sweepers would not be by until 8AM."

So he avoided his duties as a Watcher. Look at what the faithful on my block do instead. Here is a man reading *Newsweek* (one of the last on earth, to judge from the circulation figures). Here is a woman doing her crossword. The classes read the *Times*, the masses read the tabs. Obama or Jen, pick your star. Here is an icon of urban abjection: A man has pushed his driver's seat back as far as it will go, and on this worst of all surfaces, stiff as a hospital gurney and sprung like the door of a garbage chute, he sleeps. You could have lengthened your breakfast, your shower, your real sleep, or your morning kiss, but here you are, in your forward position, so that you may not fall behind. Soldiers, convicts, and field hands expect such conditions, not ordinary freemen. Good morning, sweet prince of the city, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

What is this? *King Solomon's Mines*? *The Jungle Book*? *The Fellowship of the Ring*? No—it is New York car owners coping with alternate-side parking.

When the clock ticks, and the cars must move, what ensues? An orderly changing of the guard? Dodge 'em? My schedule is not the Watchers', so I have never seen them do-si-do. I've never seen *American Idol* either. All I know is that later in the days the cars have all been rearranged. More interesting than the completion of the process is the anticipation and the tractability it betokens. The city lays a hundred burdens on us every day, via laws, regulations, frustrations, and funk. Crackdowns and cleanups lighten the load, and the lure of excitement keeps us coming back for more. We pride ourselves on being resilient and tough, able to trim when it's possible and to endure when it's not. But aren't these qualities just another name for docile and dumb? Do adults in Council Bluffs have to spend dawn in their car seats to avoid a ticket? Are the only alternatives patience and moving? **NR**

Happy Warrior BY MARK STEYN

U.S., Eh?

WRITING about Europe a couple of pages back, I didn't mention Canada—mainly because Canada isn't in Europe, although it has a European mien. But, when I do raise the subject of Her Majesty's northern dominion in this space, American conservatives sometimes query the relevance: "What's Canada to do with me?"

Hey, wake up and smell the syrup! The road to hell is paved with Trudeaupian public policy. Every malign Canadian idea (from multiculturalism to socialized health care) heads south a generation later, while every American idea (from the First Amendment to non-confiscatory taxation) foolish enough to attempt the journey north gets gunned down on the 49th parallel.

For decades the quickest way for the Canadian media to kill any proposal has been to affix the words "American-style" to it: "American-style health system," "American-style gun laws," "American-style deregulation." Now that America has adopted every Euro-Canadian fancy and stuck a few extra zeroes on the end for good measure, Canuck liberals are going to need a new bogeyman. They're thin on the ground. And "New Zealand–style deregulation" doesn't have quite the same blood-chilling ring to it.

"Obama's budget . . . serves as a watershed for Canadian conservatives, who have spent their adult lives looking enviously at the United States," wrote Jonathan Kay in Canada's *National Post*. "Question: How many of us self-proclaimed Canuck right-wingers would move south right now? . . . America is now like just about everywhere else in the West—a bloated nanny state led by a big-spending liberal."

In geopolitical terms, this is all very odd. How in an unprecedented moment of supposed unipolar hegemony did the hegemonic unipole wind up taking on all the characteristics of the Lilliputian pipsqueaks? In his address to Congress in 2003, Tony Blair said, "As Britain knows, all predominant power seems for a time invincible but, in fact, it is transient. The question is: What do you leave behind?"

Britain left behind the first global language; the legal system of a quarter of the world's nations; three-sevenths of the G7 major economies; 14 of the 25 jurisdictions with the highest GDP per capita; the four wealthiest countries with large populations (over 20 million); the key regional players in almost every corner of the globe, from South Africa to India to Australia; the least-worst part of China; and, of course, the unipolar hegemon *lui-même*.

Not bad for an empire that, in the bleak assessment of Sir Richard Turnbull, Britain's high commissioner in Aden, would be remembered for only two things—"the popularization of Association football [soccer] and the term 'f**k off.'"

The United States, by contrast, is the first non-imperial superpower. At the dawn of the American moment in 1945, it chose to project itself not in traditional great-power ways but by creating the U.N. and other transnational institutions in which it consciously diminished its own voice and artificially amplified everybody else's. Over time, all these American-created, American-funded transnational institutions became explicitly anti-American, to the point where it seems entirely routine for the representative of a genocidal regime in Sudan to be elected to the U.N. "human rights" council and announce from his plush Manhattan office that he wants to make Guantanamo Bay the main focus of his term.

America garrisons not distant ramshackle colonies but its wealthiest allies—Germany and Japan—to the point where almost every other Western nation now budgets for an ever more minimal, perfunctory military, entirely confident that U.S. defense welfare is a permanent feature of life. Troops from India, the dominions, and the colonies provided a third of Britain's military manpower in the First World War, and half in the Second. By comparison, America heads a military alliance of non-military allies in which it expends vast amounts of diplomatic energy trying to persuade the world's richest countries to cough up a token detachment of non-combat troops to man the photocopier back at barracks while the Third Infantry Division slogs up into the mountains to do all the fighting.

And, while one can admire the antipathy to empire, harder to explain is the reluctance of America to export its founding ideas. Dozens of new nations have come into being since 1945, a lot of them with the aid of American blood or treasure, yet not one was encouraged to adopt a U.S. model of government. If England is the mother of parliaments, America is a wealthy spinster with no urge to start dating.

I'm not indulging in the misplaced anglophilia to which American conservatives are sometimes prone. Contemporary Britain is an unlovely place sinking into a hell of Hogarthian depravity from which there are no easy roads back: Consider what LBJ's Great Society did to the black family, and then imagine it applied to the general population. The Britannic inheritance will last longer in India and Australia than in the mother country.

But I do worry about whether America's disinclination to sell the world its best ideas has led to some of the world's very worst ideas coming home to roost. Individual freedom is on the skids everywhere. Britons and Canadians fought tyranny abroad only to enter the 21st century incrementally but enthusiastically embracing the control-freak caprices and micro-regulatory regimes of their old enemies. The world could use a bold standard-bearer for liberty. If not America, who? **NR**

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The free market's trial by fire

The coming year will shape the world's view of competition, privatization, and free trade.

The extent of the financial crisis has yet to be revealed, but even a couple of years of declines in GDP and relatively high unemployment will not overshadow the remarkable economic achievements of the past four decades. Remember, the crisis that kills capitalism has been said to loom during every major recession and financial crisis since Karl Marx prophesied capitalism's doom.

However, though I am confident that sizable world economic growth will resume before very long under a mainly capitalist world economy, a prolonged and deep worldwide depression could cause a retreat from capitalism and globalization. There could be high tariffs, trade barriers, nationalization of weak companies, and wage and price controls—all unattractive prospects. Ultimately, middle-class and poor families would be hurt the most by unwise government policies, attacks on the foundations of a competitive economy, and policies that frighten entrepreneurs and discourage investors.

—Gary S. Becker

Rebuilding the Republican brand

What does the GOP need more: a new standard-bearer or new standards?

How confusing was the Republican presidential pitch? Throughout his ultimately failed campaign, candidate John McCain said his political idols were Theodore Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan. One of them raised the tax rate to 90 percent, and the other lowered it to 28 percent. That's like a Democrat saying he simultaneously worships at the temples of Jesse Jackson and Scoop Jackson. The "party of ideas" was clearly losing its way.

The maneuvering for leadership this spring will be a window into the party's soul. Conservatives will argue that the GOP needs to return to its traditional roots on matters like illegal immigration; moderates who tend to avoid such wedge issues will stress outreach and expanding the loyal Republican base. As they regroup, all sides can take heart by recalling that political parties, like economies, are cyclical. They rise and fall—and, if they're smart, learn to adapt to the changing times.

—Bill Whalen

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